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THE IMAGE OF VICTORY

by ARCHIBALD MacLEISH

THIS war presents a curious paradox: a curious division of minds precisely at the point at which the minds of men engaged in war are commonly united. Men engaged in war are commonly agreed on one thing at least, — the victory they mean to win. We are not altogether agreed on that point. We are determined that we shall win a victory. But what victory we do not altogether know. We have the will to victory. But the idea of victory, the conception of victory, eludes us.

I do not wish to be misunderstood. I am not discussing the morale of the American people. The morale of the American people — whatever that ambiguous and patronizing word may mean — is excellent. If I have any knowledge of American opinion — and I think I have access to such knowledge as there is — the American people are consid-

The poet, says Plato, must assume the responsibility of the political man, and more than ever in time of war. This truth we see personified by ARCHIBALD MacLEISH, one of our foremost poets and now Librarian of Congress. Chicago born and bred, a graduate of Yale and of the Harvard Law School, Mr. MacLeish turned aside from his legal career to write his poetry in the seclusion of Conway, Massachusetts. As one of the directors in the Office of War Information, his utterance has a strength and a vision, the direct culmination of his experience. This paper was presented as the Stearns Lecture at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts.

erably sounder in their opinions than most of those who worry about American opinion seem to think. They have resisted, over the past eighteen months, the efforts of powerful sections of the press to fool them with defeatist and divisionist propaganda of the noisiest and most expensive kind, and they can be trusted, I believe, to go on resisting defeatist and divisionist propaganda for a long time to come.

Neither, when I speak of a disagreement about the nature of American victory, the victory of the United Nations, do I have in mind the special cases, the sick souls, the defeated men. There is an insignificant minority of Americans, as there was also a minority of Frenchmen and Norwegians and Yugoslavs and Danes, who do not want an American victory — who fear the victory of a democratic people, in the long democratic revolution of which Henry Wallace has so movingly spoken, more than they fear a democratic defeat. We know what they are and why. In the mirror of France we know them very well. Their name is Laval and Doriot and Darlan. They need neither our consideration nor our very great concern: only our watchfulness and sharpened scorn.

What I am considering here is something

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much more important, both for now and for the years after. What I have in mind is the honest apprehension, the loyal doubt, the understandable anxiety of those who are determined we shall win this war; who are willing, if need be, to die to help their people win it; but who are nevertheless unable to understand clearly, or to imagine precisely, what our victory in this war will be. Specifically, what I have in mind is the understandable confusion of a generation of young men who were brought up to believe that the last war, though won, was lost, and that the war in which we are now engaged is nothing but the last war fought again; who therefore and most reasonably ask each other and ask us what victory this war can truly win — what victory other than the negative, defensive victory we won before, or won and lost before, or only lost.

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Those who ask this question understand very well what *defeat* in this war would mean. Indeed it would be impossible for them not to understand. The evidence is before them everywhere they look — in the starvation and misery and death of Poland, in the death and starvation and slavery of Greece, in the French prisons at the first light when the volley rattles and the hostages chosen by lot, picked out of their cells by lot, and by lot lined up in the half-light, and by lot shot down, are murdered. What they do not understand is victory. Victory as the mere absence of defeat is something they do not wish to think about. They know that kind of victory and how it tastes. But victory as victory — victory as an affirmative thing — they cannot easily imagine. Victory as an affirmative thing means something won. A disarmed enemy is not something won: a disarmed enemy is merely something prevented. And so too of a world order to assure peace in the future: a world order to assure peace is also something prevented — in the future. These things are desirable. They are valuable. We should have secured them twenty years ago. But are they victory? Are they the sum and substance of the victory we mean to win?

It is an understandable question, and those who ask it have every reason to ask. They will not be answered by words which tell them that Nazism and all its works are evil. They know Nazism and all its works are evil and they mean to destroy both it and them. Neither will they be answered by talk about our cause — talk which says our cause is freedom and freedom is a cause worth fighting for in any country. They know very well that freedom is our cause. They know that freedom was never more clearly the cause of any people than it is ours: that despotism and tyranny were never more cynically avowed by any enemy than by the enemy which threatens us. They believe also that freedom is worth fighting for. They mean to fight for it. They mean to win also. But nevertheless they are not satisfied.

And they are right not to be satisfied.

They have proposed to themselves an end and they mean to attain that end, but they cannot conceive it. They feel themselves moving at an uncontrollable speed and by their own will, their own effort, toward an end, a goal, they cannot in any way imagine. They intend to gain a victory — but what victory? What will it mean to them? What will it mean to any man? The misery, the economic dislocation, the inane prosperity followed by the meaningless hunger of the victory we won before? Or something else? And, if so, what else? Land? Islands? They cannot imagine the usefulness of land or islands. Empire? It is difficult to talk these days of empires. They think of victory in the future: they think of empires in the past. They have no patience with those who talk of empires or of islands now. They wish to know how they are to imagine their victory in terms they can believe in and understand.

It is this that people mean when they ask their leaders to tell them what we are fighting for. They do not mean that they wish to be told *why* we are fighting. They know very well why we are fighting. They always knew the why of this fighting even when the appeasers and the isolationists and the opportunists and the plain moral cowards were telling them they need never fight — that

the fighting was no concern of theirs. Neither do they mean that they wish to be told what we are fighting *against*. They have had no doubt what we were fighting against from the first shot of the first gun in Poland. Some of them knew before that, in Spain and in other countries. What they mean is precisely what they say: they wish to know what we are fighting *for* — what we propose to bring to pass by our fighting. Now that we are engaged in this war; now that we are engaged against enemies we know and for reasons we understand; now that we are engaged in this war and intend to fight this war — what do we propose to win *from* it and *by* it?

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It is an understandable question but it is, nevertheless, a curious question — a question which reflects the doubtful and still confusing experiences of the last twenty-five years and particularly of the years which followed the last war. Even the young men who ask this question most, and who most have right to ask it, speak out of the confusion and bewilderment of that experience. They have the sense of change in their bones and in their blood, but they have in their heads the shadows and the disappointments of their fathers' years. They trust themselves but not their time, and therefore they question their time. They are right, I think, to question it. But I doubt that the answer they are looking for is as far off as they sometimes think.

Certainly it is not as far off as the answers they are sometimes given would lead them to believe. And for this reason: that the answers they are given are, for the most part, answers not as to the meaning of their victory but as to the structure of the world their victory will make possible. The answers, in other words, are answers about that far-off unreal country called the "post-war world" — the world the economists and the statesmen and the technicians will construct out of the rubble of the pre-war world when the victory is won. But it is not this, I think, the young men wish to know. They are not concerned, most of them, — they are not concerned yet, — with the economy or the in-

ternational organization of the world which will follow their victory. They wish to know — certainly they wish to know — whether they will return to tramp the streets for jobs as their fathers did. They wish to know whether they will have to fight their war a second time in their forties and their fifties as their fathers, they believe, are now obliged to fight a second time the war they won. But before they come to these things — before they come to the economic order or the international controls — they wish to understand what their victory itself will be. They wish to see the shape of their victory as the Greeks, who made shapes of victory out of stone, once saw it. They wish to believe in their victory as itself a creative and accomplishing thing.

I do not think it is impossible for them to see this or believe in it. On the contrary, it would seem to me that the answer they require is already in their mouths. If they will trust themselves, if they will trust their own sense of the changing time, if they will look ahead and not back, they will give themselves their answer. For if anything about this war is certain, it is this: that those who win this war will win the future of the world.

They will win it not in some metaphorical or poetic sense, but in the most precise and practical meaning of the term. They will win the future of the world to such an extent that they will be able to change not its governments only, but its geography, its actual shape and meaning in men's minds. And they will win it not for now, not for a generation, but, if they have the courage and the will, for all the future men can now foresee. Whatever the Nazis may say about *Lebensraum*, whatever their Far Eastern accomplices may say about Greater-Asia Co-prosperity Spheres, whatever our own imperialists may say about a new imperium, it is not for continents or islands or for seas between them that this war is fought. This war is fought on the one side to dominate, on the other side to liberate, an age — a new age, an age which every man who lets his eyes look forward can now see.

The sense of the new age, the new world, has troubled men for generations. They

have had the sense of the future in them a long time. Change after change in the machinery of their lives has thrown their minds forward. For the most part they have been deceived. The changes have proved, for the most part, to be changes on the surface only; changes of convenience or of habit; water out of a tap instead of water out of a well; power out of a steam kettle instead of power out of a mule; light from a wire instead of light from wax. But the sense of the future has haunted them nevertheless. And now the sense of the future has come true. They see before them — those who have eyes to see — a world so different, different in so clear a sense, that they have no choice but to accept its difference.

4

Most of us thought of the airplane in the years between the wars as a new gadget, — an automobile which flew. We had been confused by a long list of inventions, each more spectacular than the last, of which the airplane was the latest. Even when this war began, we did not understand its meaning. We told each other that after the war there would be thousands of planes as there were millions of cars after the last war, and everyone would have his own. The plane was simply another gadget in a gadget universe, a new convenience. We do not think that now. We know now that the plane is capable of altering the geography of our world — and therefore the history of our world. We know that the world which the airplane dominates will be a different world from the world which went before. We see before us, in other words, — or we can see it if we look, — an age new in its essential possibilities and therefore a new age.

The ages of human history are not created by mechanical inventiveness, but there have been, in the history of our race, mechanical inventions which have changed the possibilities, and thus the minds, and thus, for better or for worse, the men. Landlocked men thought of the earth as a huge island surrounded by an unknown, undiscoverable sea. Seafaring men, as they extended their laborious mastery of the water, attempted to

think of the earth as a globe but succeeded only in imagining it as a belt of traversable water and inhabitable land fenced off between the two impenetrable polar caps of ice and fog and cold — a globe in theory, but in fact a globe-encircling river with temperate or tropic shores. That the mastery of the air will fix a different image in men's minds, — an image which will father a new age, — no one who knows the meaning of that mastery can doubt — no one who knows what voyages men and planes have made already in this war: the long flights of the ferrying command, the bombing thrusts at unbelievable objectives, the regular runs from continent to continent.

Indeed the image is already forming. To men of my generation, born in a seafaring world, the port of Murmansk lies east across the Atlantic and on east around the Scandinavian peninsula, thousands of sea miles. But Murmansk, to the flyers, is a bare eleven hundred miles north across the polar ice cap from Greenland. To us Greenland is farther east than New York City and therefore farther than New York from Tokyo. To the airmen, New York to Tokyo is seven thousand miles; Greenland to Tokyo around the pole five thousand. To us the straight line from La Guardia Field to Foynes in Ireland is north of east, straight out across the Atlantic. To them the shortest line, but not the straightest, — for no distances along the globe are straight, — curves north along the edge of Newfoundland, along the curving of the earth, and on around.

No one can doubt that the world which mastery of the air creates will be a different world. But the nature of that world — its human character — is still uncertain. And it is that nature which the outcome of this war will fix. One or the other, the Nazi image of the airmen's earth or ours, will be imposed upon the world that follows. We know them both: the Nazi image because the Nazis have spelled it out for us a hundred times; our own because already we begin to see its outlines. We can guess even now what the image of the airmen's earth will be if free men make it. If those who have the mastery of the air are free men and imagine for themselves as free men what

their world could be, their world will be the full completed globe — the final image men have moved toward for so long and never reached.

5

Never in all their history have men been able truly to conceive the world as one: a single sphere, a globe having the qualities of a globe, a round earth in which all the directions eventually meet, in which there is no center because every point, or none, is center — an equal earth which all men occupy as equals. The airmen's earth, if free men make it, will be truly round: a globe in practice, not in theory. Already, under the compulsions of the war, a generation of young men has come to think in terms of globes. It is with strings on globes, not rulers on navigating charts, that the officers of the ferrying command plot out their distances, and it is always with the curving of the earth in mind that the young pilots of the bombing commands imagine to themselves their flights. The obstacles which limited the earth to men in ships are not obstacles to men in planes. Cold to the airmen is no barrier: they find it everywhere and occupy it in all climates. Ice to the airmen is no wall: they cross it easily as land or water. Distance is no hindrance. The limited voyages of even the greatest ships were voyages across a seeming-level sea. The great flights of the bomber planes and the ferry planes of this war are flights *around* the earth, not across it. The famous clipper which was caught by the war in Australian waters and made its way *west* to New York: the two ships which flew into Moscow with the Hopkins mission and returned, one east and one west, to meet on an American airfield — the men who flew these ships were men who had the sense of the roundness of the earth as no men could have had it before the air was mastered.

If we win this war — if we and the free peoples united with us win this war — the image of the age which now is opening will be this image of a global earth, a completed sphere. But if the Nazis win, the image will be very different. The air-earth as the Nazis see it is not the earth swept forward to the

final and completed sphere, but the earth thrown backward to the ancient landlocked island of the centuries before the seas were opened. The official Nazi architects of this official Nazi air-earth are the Nazi geopoliticians — the professors and the generals of the Haushofer school of generals and geographers. To the Nazi geopoliticians, the true picture of the world is not the picture of a globe, but of a "world island" with a "heart land" at its center. The "heart land" is Germany. The "world island" is the vast land-linked mass of Europe, Africa, and Asia. Around this island are the seven seas. And anchored off the island shores in tributary dependence to the iron Main are all the other continents and islands of the earth — the Americas, Australia, Greenland, all the rest. From the Nazi "heart land," air power will dominate the "world island." From the shores of the "world island," air power will dominate the seas — as air power dominated the seas off Malaya and the Pacific archipelagos. Across the seas the threat of air power will hold the tributary continents and islands in subjection. It is not, I assure you, a dream. It is a geography. It is a geography which has worked in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Southwest Pacific and which the Nazis mean shall work for the whole earth.

If the Nazis win, in other words, the new age of air power will be the old landlocked age of mythological men, and the image of the airmen's earth will be the image of the central island and the encircling sea. It is curious to recall, in this context, that there was some talk and more writing a year or two ago about the Nazi New Order as an order new not in name only but in truth — an order so new, so revolutionary, that it had the future in it like a wave. It is curious to remember that some who loved the air and knew the air accepted for themselves and even taught this theory. For surely, whatever else the Nazi New Order may be, — and there are millions of living and half-living and no longer living Frenchmen, Dutchmen, Poles, Norwegians who could tell us what it is, — whatever else the Nazi New Order may be, it is not the new order of the airmen's age. It is indeed the precise

opposite of that order: the denial and suppression and destruction of that order — a denial and suppression so complete and so brutal that a man might wonder whether the Nazis had not fought this war precisely for that purpose, precisely to use the mastery of the air as an instrument to abort the promise of that mastery; promise that to them was threat.

6

It is against this Nazi New Order of death, and new revelation of old ignorance, that this war is fought. But not *against* them only. Those who think it is — those who think of this war as a negative, defensive war; those who question what our victory in this war can be — have not considered very carefully the nature of the time we live in: the opening, eventful nature of this time. They have not considered that there lies ahead of us, by every certainty, an opening age, and that that age belongs by right of its own logic to the free — to us and to all free men. They have not realized that in preventing our enemies from conquering that age and distorting that age we must conquer it ourselves; that in driving out and forever forbidding those who would have seized the future, we will seize it; that in destroying by force of arms the suppressive and tyrannical image the Nazis would have stamped upon it, we must inevitably stamp an image of our own. So far indeed is it from being true that the nature of our victory is difficult to name, that no man who considers what the struggle truly is can fail to name it. We who win this war will win the right and power to impose upon the opening age the free man's image of the earth we live in. We who win this war will win the future. The future which will follow from this war belongs to us.

Neither mastery of the air nor power in the air nor the airmen's global image of the earth can make, alone, the world we hope to live in. There are no panaceas and no cures, and the future of any people is a continuation of its past — a hope shackled by history. Nevertheless we know, all of us, the power of images in our lives and in the lives of nations. We know that those who think

their world a free place of free movement, of free commerce both in men and words, are already free men, whatever limitations are put upon their freedom by brutality or force. We know also that those who do not think of their world in this way, who accept another image of their world, are slaves however they hold themselves, or however they move in apparent freedom from one place to another. We know therefore what it means to win this war.

For hundreds of years, thousands of years, the sea was the great symbol of freedom, and men struggled in many wars over many centuries to keep it so. To be free was to go on the sea waters. There was no man, said the ancient Saxon poet, but "longing comes upon him to fare forth on the water." It was the same with the Greeks and with all ancient peoples. The sea was freedom. The sea was the great symbol of freedom. Men, once they had built ships and learned the winds, would fare forth on the water. They would go and come freely; trade back and forth; exchange cloth and grain and iron; exchange words; exchange beliefs; discover new continents. For two thousand, three thousand years it was the opening endless sea which men followed for their freedom.

Now there is a new element upon which men can fare forth. Men have mastered the air. And the question now — the question, whether we so intend or not, on which this terrible war is fought — is whether the air will be a new symbol and a new practice of an even greater freedom, or whether it will not; whether the air will be to the sea what the sea was to the locked land, or whether it will not; whether the air will be an instrument of freedom such as men have never dared to dream of or an instrument of slavery such as men had never thought to feel — an instrument of slavery by which a single nation can enslave the earth and hold the earth in slavery without the hope or possibility of rebellion and revolt.

To win this war for freedom is not to win a doubtful victory. To win this war for freedom is to win the greatest triumph any nation, any people, ever won.

related in such an entirely unexpected fashion that the ear has always a new element of harmonic surprise to cope with. Of course, the arbitrariness of these relations is only superficial, for at the back of them there is an organic logic of relations which Prokofiev discovers and establishes in his music.

What is somewhat perplexing is the mechanical form of his music. However, Prokofiev is traditionally Russian in that; for, with a few exceptions, the Russian composers fitted their music into an existing form and did not let the form grow out of the nature of their musical invention. Another puzzling thing about Prokofiev's music is that, despite all the squareness, conciseness of his rhythm, his actual rhythmical inventiveness is not very far-reaching. That is, Prokofiev is not preoccupied, as are many contemporary composers, with rhythmical problems, and in that sense again he is closer to the contemporary music of Russia and Germany than to that of France, England, and the United States. Prokofiev always says that his chief preoccupation lies in the invention of good themes, and by good themes he means those melodies that one would recognize as indubitably his own. Formless and amorphous melodies are what he despises most in music. To realize this emphasis upon melodic invention is most significant for the comprehension of Prokofiev's music.

It has often been said that the modern pianistic style owes much to Prokofiev, and that it is Prokofiev who for the first time discovered the percussive use of the piano. I am in no position to judge how true that statement is, but that Prokofiev is one of the major contemporary composers for the piano and one of the best technicians of this instrument is absolutely clear. Such works as his second and third piano sonatas and his third piano concerto are by now piano classics, and his *Visions Fugitives*, *Sarcasmes*, and *Suggestion Diabolique* are regular parts of piano recitals. In his piano style Prokofiev does not shun the traditions of the nineteenth century. He is not unduly afraid of the Liszt-Chopin-Schumann heritage. Probably one of his greatest achievements is the creation of a perfectly unified contempo-

rary style of piano music which forms a synthesis of eighteenth and nineteenth century traditions with modern technical inventions. In addition to this, his piano style has the great quality of being alive and remaining personal. Prokofiev avoids certain technical gags and fads to which many of his contemporaries were addicted (jazz rhythms, neo-Bachism, and others), and thus escapes being both archaic and banal. He is certainly the best piano composer since Debussy.

Personally, I think that the best music Prokofiev ever wrote is not the sarcastic, joking music which is so well known in this country, but rather those infrequent pages composed in a more lyrical mood: for instance, the nostalgic and melodically beautiful last pages of *The Prodigal Son* (the ballet produced in the last year of Diaghilev's reign in Paris in 1929), the second movement of his third piano concerto, his songs on the poems of Akhmatova, even the *Lieutenant Kije* suite, and the somewhat overprovincial yet tender and moving songs from his last opera, *Semyon Kotko*. Another Prokofiev whom I like particularly is the noisy, boisterous, straightforward, and yet very earnest Prokofiev of *The Steel Leap* and the *Third Symphony*. To me it seems strange that only the sarcastic side of his talent has become so well known in this country. This is probably because few composers have the gift of being sarcastic in music without being eclectic. Sarcasm and irony are among the most difficult things to express originally in music. I believe that the success of *Peter and the Wolf* in its magnificent English rendition results mainly from the fact that composers here have not preoccupied themselves with children's literature and children's art as Soviet Russian composers have done so successfully. In itself, the piece is of course banal and trivial, but its charm comes from the fact that the composer knew he was writing very slight music.

Another peculiarity about Prokofiev's music is that its style lacks any consistent polyphonic development. Prokofiev has a particular dislike for the usual imitative counterpoint, and always casts aspersions on certain of his contemporaries for writing imitation fugues and fugatos. He contends

that this makes the style necessarily derivative of and like eighteenth century polyphonic music. This sounds somewhat paradoxical for someone who has made free use of the rather mechanical standards of eighteenth century musical form and applied it to the very structure of his themes.

With all its individual characteristics, the music of Prokofiev, particularly in its melismatic nature, is deeply rooted in the Russian past. Sometimes it reflects Moussorgsky, sometimes Tchaikovsky, and thus it does not, like so much modern music, hang in the air, rootless and without an affiliation with the past. This is enhanced by a masterful orchestrational technique, a technique born of the study of such Russian works as the ballets of Tchaikovsky, the operas of Glinka, and the late operas of Rimsky-Korsakov. His orchestration is much more conventional than that of Stravinsky. It is rougher, less polished, and it sometimes lacks the audible and wonderful transparency of Stravinsky's scores. But Prokofiev's music is always full of substance and of imagination. Sometimes, as particularly in the *Kije* suite, the third piano concerto, and the last page of *The Prodigal Son*, the quality of his craftsmanship is of the highest order.

Since Prokofiev returned to Russia, a process of simplification has taken place in his music. I will not venture to say whether this process was a genuine one within Prokofiev or was forced upon the composer by that particular ideological constellation now prevailing in the U.S.S.R. Unfortunately, many scores of the late years are not available here, and his latest opera (*Semyon Kotko*), produced with tremendous success last year in Moscow, of which all Russian magazines and newspapers were writing for months, cannot be secured. One would have to look through much more music by Prokofiev to judge how real this simplification is in him. There are, however, a few disconcerting signs which appear with every new composition of Prokofiev that comes to us. They all point in the same direction: the melody of Prokofiev begins to lose its indi-

viduality in a frame of not very well digested and often old-fashioned folk material. At other times, as in his second violin concerto, there are certain sections which, luscious as they seem to the ears of the concert public, conductors, and performers, are in essence trivial and terribly old-fashioned. However, his sixth piano sonata, written a year or so ago, does not show these defects. It is full of the same quality which Prokofiev so amply demonstrated in his past music.

When people go back to Russia one feels an irretrievable loss. The cleavage between Russia and the rest of the world is complete. In a certain sense the person who returns to Russia really dissolves in the perplexing new atmosphere. From everyone who has emerged one hears the same story: the rediscovery of the motherland is a hard thing. Later, once one is adjusted to the new life and the new ideas, there seems to be no way back, and all those relations which were established abroad fade away, disappear in the dark recesses of one's memory.

Recently I saw a photograph of Prokofiev in the uniform of a fire fighter of the Moscow Conservatory. There he was, the good Sergei Sergeievitch, with his open Russian grin scarcely concealed by huge eyeglasses and the blur of the newspaper photograph, dressed in his awkward, medieval-looking uniform and peering at me through the space of continents and the timelessness of memory. How his heart must suffer now; how it must beat as one with the millions of Russian hearts defending the new country they have built at the cost of untold sacrifices! What deep anger and earthy hate he must feel toward the ruthless enemy who has so brutally shattered the realization of his people's dreams, and destroyed the work of several generations of Russian peasants, workers, and intellectuals! Prokofiev, who always believed in them when others doubted, must share their deep conviction that now is the gravest and noblest hour of their history, now is their Thermopylae and their Verdun.

WOMEN AND DYNAMITE

by ROBERT EASTON

I

EVERY winter day at one o'clock Dynamite and I took heavy six-tined forks that were meant to shovel feed for cattle and cleaned the barn, leaving our horses saddled in their stalls ready for the afternoon round. This was a day that sometimes in a California winter blows like a blessing from the sea. Dynamite that very morning had put on long underwear, expecting a cold snap, and as he warmed up a little at the end of the fork and began to sweat, the wool tickled his skin and made him itch and swear and blame his wife.

"Woman is a weak-minded outfit, anyway," he said, boosting a load out the window to the compost pile and grinning his little boy's grin. He had animal's teeth, very white and sharp, and eyes the color of blue electric flames that cut through steel. His legs were bowed beyond belief, — many a brone had felt them on his ribs like iron bands, — and for a lad of twenty-six with a wife and four children Dynamite had a lot to say: "Never did use undy-wear," he said, "till I got married, nor socks neither. Back home when it come cold we put old newspaper down our boots; they's all a man needs till he gets a woman."

Home for Dynamite was any place he happened to be. Once it had been the Utah border, a village in a valley ringed with mountains where the desert went up and the

rocks came down and just where they met there was a little room for man.

We worked in shadow. Sea wind blowing in the open door swept dust over us from the gray dirt floor of the barn. Outside, trucks were passing on the road; we could see the backs of cattle in their pens beyond, and then the deep adobe fields, tinged by early rains with a faint green shadow of new grass. Far away the Napa Hills rose up and made a line across the open door just even with the stirrup of the boss's saddle, hanging on its peg.

Dynamite with an idea was like a chicken with a seed, taking it up, dropping it, clucking over it several times, and finally either swallowing it or walking away.

Now all this sounded like a big seed, so I waited, and in a minute he said, "See this barn?" He was standing at the window, leaning on his fork, looking out across the compost pile. I came along and pitched a load and said yes, I did see the barn.

"Sure pretty, ain't it?" said Dynamite.

Well, it did look pretty. It stood off there half a mile away across a grassy field that was so thin and green it looked like water and the wind ran on it sparkling. The barn was part in shadow, part in sun; and somebody had cut three black squares out of its side that were windows, like ours, and on a hill beyond there was a mist, as in the spring.

"Yessir," said Dynamite, "that's a fine idee of what a barn should be. Makes you want to git up and start over there, don't it — thinkin' there is all that makes a good barn good: sweet hay and horses in their stalls, pussycats, saddles, old harness hangin'

One of the youngest contributors in this issue, ROBERT EASTON was born in California on July 4, 1915. Educated at the public schools in Santa Barbara, then at Andover, Stanford, and Harvard, he got down to earth as soon as possible, working first for a large cattle company and then as a cowpuncher on the McCreery Ranch not far from Monterey. Now he is in the Field Artillery.

smellin' like last summer. You say, 'By God, that must be the best barn in all the world,' but it ain't, is it?"

"I don't know," I said. "Maybe it is."

"Till you get there anyway it is," said Dynamite, and then he said no more and I didn't hurry him.

We took our ponies and started on the afternoon round, going first to get the bulling steer and putting him in the hospital. That brought us out on Mill Alley between the pens of cattle, on a knoll above the mill where the wind of forty miles strikes bare and always blows. It took the feed grains from the mangers and stuck them in our eyes and slopped them through our clothes and curled the dust away on a long banner from the ventilator on top the mill.

Dynamite pulled up his pony.

"Hear it?" he said.

"Hear what?" I said.

"That's what it is," said Dynamite.

"Damn me if it ain't!"

He held his hat on with one hand, looking right up at the sky where some power lines crossed going to the mill. "Don'tcha hear it?" he said.

I said, "What the devil are you talking about?"

"The wind in the wires," said Dynamite.

"What about it?" I said.

"Nothing," said Dynamite, "nothing about *it*, but about me plenty, 'cause that's the sound I heard the night of the twentieth of September, '33, when I rode off the top o' the world to have a drink and see my girl."

We went on down the knoll and around the hayfield to the big stack, where the wind couldn't find us, nor the boss, and there Dynamite told me his story.

2

"Every year in May we took cattle in the mountain, earlier sometimes, if the year was good, and always we was champing to get away. Winter in town leaves a feller in the red. Bills here, argy-ments here, some little maiden a-wanting to git married; they's no profit. You go along with your feet fixed one way and your mind another and if ye get as far as March without meeting the sheriff on

the way you're lucky. March — she's better than a drink of whiskey! Then your ponies' hair begins to slip, you're getting out the packsaddles, a-oiling up old leather, and every guy is friendly again for the first time since Christmas.

"We hit the Mormon trail that comes in out o' the desert and takes up past town onto the mountain. Our range was all that as was east of west and north of south, and any more we needed. That country's not like this; we don't prison our cattle. The rim-rocks is our fences.

"Well, when you first go up she's hunky-dory. The cattle wants to go, the ponies wants to go — they's sick of valley living. All you're cravin' is that feel of hair between your knees and a chance to run and bust him out; you look the other way just a-hoping that pa'tic'lar red steer with the Roman nose and the droop-horn will take a break, 'cause you see he's got a run in him, and sure enough he does and then you make old mountain smoke.

"My job was what they call the Tennessee Pass, where cattle drifts in summer when the meadow feed goes short, and sometimes they travels all of Eighty Mile Hill clear down to the River, unless I catch 'em first, which I usually does.

"I made lone camp on Aspen Crick, by a big old boulder where there was a cedar tree and an ice-cold spring run out of the stone. I made me seats and tables, a corral built of them hairy cedar logs; a bed of boughs; a canvas lean-to for when it rained. I packed in grain for my pony. I had horseshoes, nails, and pounds and pounds of sowbelly, spuds, and beans; and I had all my thoughts of what'd been since last I camped on Aspen Crick. To think 'em I had company. Off south was the Old Man, twelve thousand feet and white with snow all summer long. I could see him there on moonlight nights, hanging off above me like a ghost. I'd sit by the fire then, eating my beans, pounding me some jerky for a stew, and when I had eat I'd go on sitting there just to listen — me all alone, you know, and old pony over there in his corral a-munchin'. I'd watch the fire-light run up and down a grove of quakies; quaking aspens, that growed beside the

water, thin and white, you know, with delicate leaves like they was people's hair. I'd imagine they *was* people. It was so awful quiet there, seemed like I had a chance to think for the first time; and them little trees put me in mind of fellers I knowed.

"When you was a kid, did you ever sit and think who was your best friends? Well, that's what I done. I'm not ashamed to own it. I wasn't no more than seventeen, anyways. . . . So I thought of Hap, my pard, who'd been with me through many a scrape and was keepin' my other horse, a little sorrel with cat-hips. I thought a lot about that cat-hipped sorrel. I needed him to spell old Tony off, and hoped that Hap would take a notion to ride up and see me. Then I thought of Kitty McWilliams and Hoopaloo, both good guys, and of a feller named Harry I met that winter. Handsome Harry, they called him, and he was drunk . . . drunk all the time. Once he was a-gonna meet us at a certain place but never showed and they found him two days later on the Della Road, froze stiff, drunk. Cedar Bill, I thought about, and others, but amongst them aspen trees was one smaller than the rest, with branches like the arms of ferns, and leaves the wind whispered through and made to dance in the firelight, and that one was my girl, Maxine."

Dynamite put a straw into his mouth and seemed to think of something off the path of his story.

"But that's all right," he said, "tha's all right. I had a good time there three months, and then I began to tire. You get so used to yourself. Everything's right where you left it. In the morning you go out and at evening you come back, and if a squirrel has walked across the table and kicked at the crumbs you'd know it. And I got tired of hearing nobody's voice but my own, and tired of working with horseflesh and cowflesh and rope and leather, and tired as hell of eatin' alone. I wanted to mix with human kind.

"And so it was this night . . . I'd been out late. There was a change in the weather coming. I could see the sun go down orange out here in Californy and I guessed that might mean trouble for cowboys. This was

late September, see, and by then anything can happen. If snow comes cattle drift, and you drift with 'em, whether it's a mile or eighty. So I'd made a long round and come out just at evening on the Indian Rock. I could see all the valley, all the desert, all the mountain. Oh, she was a panoramic! Old Tony and I set there and watched her, while down in the valley the lights come on one by one, like little stars. A cluster of 'em made the town; one I knowed was the Café my girl Maxine worked and I wanted to be there awful bad. Now that town didn't amount to *nuthin'*! Why, at high noon it wouldn't make a shadow. And dry, oh man! No water run by that place! . . . I don't know why I wanted to go; I'd lived there all my life, but I had to go.

"I says to Tony, 'How do you feel?' and he says, 'Fine.' So we piles over the edge.

"I knowed I could make it in three hours going straight down and be there before them little stars went out. I'd go right to the Café and see Maxine; I'd find Hap and get my sorrel horse, and I'd do a lot of things that would be worth telling later.

"Did ye ever start to go anywheres at night? The 'how' nor 'why' of it don't matter, ye just go. Well, that was the way with me; and I begun to sing, because I was a silly kid then. I sung that song — you've heard me: —

"Up-on my pony,
Up-on old Tony,
To ride o'er the prairie
To see my charming Mary. . . .

"And so I slid off that mountain and I bet I was something to hear. That country's funny built. She's made of sandstone and looks like somebody threw her up on edge, like a deck of cards. Just when I was flyin' high, one of them cards slipped out from under old Tony, and to me it felt like the whole deck. We just quit the ground and flew a ways, and when we come down I was pinned agin a cedar tree, under the saddle, with old Tony waving his feet at the moon and me a-spittin' sandstone and trying to git ahold of his head. See, I had one leg under the saddle and agin the tree, and every time he'd move I'd think that leg was goin' with him.

"We man-o-veered round a bit, and I got my short tug on the off-side undone and the saddle slid ahead and let me go. Well, that was all right. My leg was still there, and pretty quick we was on our way down the mountain. I was feeling no pain; I couldn't do wrong. Did ye ever feel that way — go through a narrer escape and come out knowing the angels was on your side and you couldn't miss from there on in? I went down that mountain, under them big pines, and I was light enough to fly. I was a-gonna see my girl; I was a-gonna have a drink and put my feet under a table and have people bring me things. And I didn't care how long it took, 'cause I had music in me and could have rid to the end of the world.

"The old night opened up and let me down like water does a stone. Air rushin' in my ears was all I heard. I'd watch them little lights go flicker through the trees. They'd been at my feet to start, but now they was pushing away into the desert and I spurred old Tony to catch 'em. I got thinking of Maxine at the Café. She'd be off at nine. By then my leg would be all swole up and sore, and maybe she'd take me home and rub lineament on it. I'd have a bath first. I knowed a place I could git one for thirty-five cents. They give you medicated soap, too. And then I thought of Hap, my pal, and where I could find him. Probably the Hearty Laugh Saloon; and that made me think of the steaks old Jippy served there and I got hungry as hell. I figured to go there first and have a drink or two and a steak and get the lay of things.

"Just about then I run onto cattle bedded deep in sarvis brush . . . first one scared me, an old cow critter. I thought she was a bear, starting up there in the dark with a stomp and a snoof, but I was through the rest afore they could get out of bed, and by the faint light of the moon I knowed they was outlaws — I could see their white horns rise up around me all in a second, like them yucca flowers blooms on the desert.

"Once I come out onto a bench, and over a dry meadow, and looked back and saw my dust a-risin' like smoke off'n that black mountain side.

"Then I run out of the timber into scrub

cedars, dwarfs of trees that tried to be a forest but never made it. A cloud come and covered the moon, so I couldn't see only the big things, and run old Tony right over them little trees and got my face slapped bad. Did you ever git a scrape from pine or cedar . . . oily trees? It's like somebody cut you open and poured in fire. But after a while we was down onto the desert, where there's nothing grows but lizards and shad scale, and there I could break old Tony into a lope. It was a mile to the crick bed and I knowed that farms begun on the other side and fences. I never reckoned on anything till I got there. But some fool had run a drift fence right across that desert and Tony hit 'er at the end of his stride. It was like jumping in a net. I mounted the horn but grabbed leather with both fists and come down. Another horse but Tony would have cut himself in half, and if folks in that country built fences like they does out here I guess even he'd o' done it, but this guy — this fence builder, I'd say he come from Californy 'cept he didn't know how to build a fence — had just got one there and put cedar posts in the desert about every hundred yards and hung some wire on 'em. I bet that wire had a give of ten yards. I could get enough slack to twist and break it with my hands. Then I lit a match to have a look at Tony and seen he was cut pretty bad on the chest, poor devil. He wasn't in very good shape anyway after all summer on the mountain.

"But we was goin' to town, and by God we was a-goin'.

"So we went.

"Beyond the crick, farms come out and stopped the desert. From there on I knowed where the wire gates was in the fields. I could tell old man Stefans had put in alfalfa with water from his new well; that the widow James was pruning her apricots; that such and such a barking dog belonged to Hanky Hanks. Pretty quick I was out onto the Della Road. Town was only half a mile. I could see the sign of the Hearty Laugh Saloon, but old Tony was a-commencin' to loosen behind, the way a pony does when he gives out. For a minute I thought I'd git off and walk him, and then I thought hell

no, if I can't ride into town I won't go at all and I asked old Tony confidential if he thought he could make it, and he said he reckoned he could if I'd give him time, so we cut down to a walk and it was that way we hit Main Street.

"Baker's Livery Stable happens to be first on your right. The place was all dark but I knowed how to git in. I found some axle grease and doctored old Tony and give him a good feed, and then I went on to the Saloon. But I took a detour on the way. I wanted to see my girl. It was only 8.15 but maybe I could see her. So at the next street I turned off and went down to the café. I didn't go inside. The place was full and she was running up and down the tables. I waited there across the street where I could see it all, how she'd laugh and smile and make words with her mouth I couldn't hear to these folks she was a-waitin' on, and to me they was the luckiest people in the world. Oh, my, she was a sweet-lookin' maiden in them days! . . . pretty face, pretty figure, her foot so light it never touched the ground. But when I seen her serve a plate, I knowed then why it was I'd come: I was sick of bein' laid agin the earth at night and bein' rubbed all day by rope and leather; I wanted them little hands to touch me. And then I looked at my own hands, covered with axle grease and blood, some of Tony's, some of it mine, and I thought, 'You dirty hog, you ain't fit to mix with human kind; go git yourself respectable.' So I turned round and headed for the Saloon.

"I can't say just how good that old Saloon looked. Them swingin' doors was like the heavenly gates to me, 'cause I come a man a-wearied and blood was on me and my right leg burned like hell's own fire; but I had my own idees and I was on my way and when you're that away the rest don't matter.

"So I swung inside. There was Jippy at the counter rolling the boys for a drink; there was the green tables and the poker games; and I thought, 'Well, this is good; this is all right.' As I headed up to the bar I seen an advertisement card saying Jean Harlow was a-gonna play next week in something, and I thought, 'By God, I'll do 'er

again next Wednesday and take Maxine to see that.'

"Then I pounds a fist on the bar and calls for Jippy.

"'High, Powder Keg,' he says. 'With you in a minute,' and goes on rolling the bones.

"Well, after five minutes he come and I was mad.

"'What the hell, now,' I told him. 'Forgetting old friends?'

"'Naw,' he says, 'naw . . .' and then, 'Been away?'

"I says, 'Gimme a double whiskey.'

"When he come back I told him to git me a steak rare, the best in the house.

"Then I had another whiskey and commenced lookin' for society.

"A bunch of guys was standing there, so I goes over and asks 'em to have a drink with me; Jippy lined 'em up and we downed 'em and they kept saying 'okay' and 'swell,' so I had Jippy line 'em up again.

"Then these guys begun to talk, but not to me. They was working on a road some place that was cutting the Rocky Mountains in half, and all they could talk about was dough and WPA and CCC and Roosevelt, Roosevelt. I didn't hent to hear about any of that, so I looked round again and seen old Hoopaloo over there at one of the card games.

"'Come out of that, you old coot!' I told him and he come. I set him up a drink and asked him first about Maxine. Yeah, she was fine. Yeah, prettier'n ever. Nope, nobody had beat my time. She'd sure be glad to see me. . . . Been away?

"'Well,' I said, 'the hell with you; here's my steak and I'm hungry.'

"So I swung round and begun to think better of old Jippy just because he'd brought me that steak.

"'How's Hap?' I asks him.

"'Dunno,' he says. 'Haven't seen him lately.'

"'What happened about him and that Seamans girl . . . I heard her folks was goin' to court over it; or that's what a guy told me last week on the mountain.'

"'Been on the mountain?' he says.

"'Yeah, I've been on the mountain,' I says.

"Well, come to think of it,' he says, 'Hap *did* go out of town the other day . . . kind of in a hurry, too.'

"Was he ridin' a little cat-hipped sorrel?"

"Yeah,' says Jippy, 'believe he was. . . . Say, wasn't that *your* horse?"

"No,' I says. 'No . . . used to be, but I sold him to Hap.'

"The steak was getting cold right there under my eyes, but I don't know — I'd kindly lost my interest.

"Well,' I said, 'this looks like a good steak.' So I cut in, and do you know that steak was just a-turning, just a little bad, like milk, so that you can't decide whether to quit eating or go on. But I stayed with her, kindly felt I had to.

"I forgot to tell you — all this time somewhere in the back of the room or just outside, I couldn't say right where, they was a noise rising and falling and passing away, like the sound of the wind in them wires. I'd heard it but I'd been too much on the move to notice; and then it was I made my big mistake: workin' on that steak I had a chanct to think.

"What the hell was that sound? I stuck my head out the window but there wasn't no wind. I come back and eat awhile. Somebody put a nickel in the phonygraph and it played a song about 'I Surrender.' Then all of a sudden that wailing sound made itself into words, like the radio does when you tune her in square, and I heard it was a nagging woman. That's all it was: just a woman. I eat awhile and begun to get indigestion. She was after her old man for something back there behind the wall, poor devil. I feel sorrier for him than any man on earth and I never even *seen* him. While listening I begun to feel the burning of my leg, my face, and a dozen other places I didn't know I had. I wearied fast but that woman, she never wearied; she kept on forever like the wind does in them wires. I couldn't eat no more. Then the phonygraph song about 'I Surrender,' it run down hill and quit, and everything in that room flattened out with it. I begun to think about

my camp on Aspen Crick — just a little thought at first but she got bigger mighty fast, like a train coming down a track, and then it seemed I wasn't a-getting enough air in that room; and how the others laughed and went on playing cards, right in the face of that woman there behind the wall I couldn't see. I ordered me another double whiskey, and when I'd drunk it I went out of that place.

"I headed back up Main Street. When I come to the street of my girl's café I kept a-goin', but once I looked. I seen the square of light the big window cut out of the sidewalk and there come a sound of dishes, sudden-like, when somebody opened a door and went through into the kitchen, and that almost got me 'cause it meant Maxine. But I kept on. I was sour at the roots and couldn't change.

"I went and got Bill Baker out of bed and asked about my little cat-hipped horse, and he said Hap had it over to Joe Petrillo's, so I went and got out Joe, and he told me Jippy was right: Hap had rode him out of town, in a hurry. Then I was mad. I went back to the stable and give old Tony another pail of oats and a rub and told him we'd have to travel again; and he didn't care much for that, poor devil, 'cause he was a tired horse.

"As we shook out our bridle on the Della Road, day was trying to git over the mountain but couldn't make it. Old mountain was too much for him, took up all the sky. Kindy like Jacks, the foreman, in the doorway of the barn, only here I knowed what the mountain had to say 'cause up on Aspen Crick I'd heard him."

Dynamite finished his story. It wasn't like him, but he never asked me if I understood.

As we rode back over the knoll, they switched the lights on in the Mill and I said, pointing, "It's lucky the power line crosses here or you might never have remembered that story."

"Oh, yes I would," he said. "I can't forget it. I'm married to that girl, Maxine."

— THE NEW ATLANTIC SERIAL —

THE
Year of
DECISION

— 1846 —

BY BERNARD DeVOTO



— CHAPTERS I-XI —

INVOCATION

WHEN I go out of the house for a walk, uncertain as yet whither I will bend my steps, and submit myself to my instinct to decide for me, I find, strange and whimsical as it may seem, that I finally and inevitably settle southwest, toward some particular wood or meadow or deserted pasture or hill in that direction. My needle is slow to settle — varies a few degrees and does not always point due southwest, it is true, and it has good authority for this variation, but it always settles between west and south-southwest. The future lies that way to me, and the earth seems more unexhausted and richer on that side. The outline which would bound my walks would be, not a circle, but a parabola, or rather like one of those cometary orbits which have been thought to be non-returning curves, in this case opening westward, in which my house occupies the place of the sun. I turn round and round irresolute sometimes for a quarter of an hour, until I decide, for the thousandth time, that I will walk into the southwest or west. Eastward I go only by force; but westward I go free. Thither no business leads me. It is hard for me to believe that I shall find fair landscapes or sufficient wildness and freedom behind the eastern horizon. I am not excited by the prospect of a walk thither; but I believe that the forest which I see in the western horizon stretches uninterruptedly toward the setting sun, and there are no towns nor cities in it of enough consequence to disturb me. Let me live where I will, on this side is the city, on that the wilderness, and ever I am leaving the city more and more and withdrawing into the wilderness. I should not lay so much stress on this fact if I did not believe that something like this is the prevailing tendency of my countrymen. I must walk toward Oregon, and not toward Europe.

HENRY THOREAU

THE YEAR OF DECISION

1846

by BERNARD DeVOTO

THE purpose of this book is to realize the Far Western frontier as personal experience. Since Turner's great beginning the frontier has been a favorite subject of the professional historian, and yet there is no unified study of the area. There are a great many specialized studies but there is no synthesis of them. The profession, in short, has broken up this phase of our history into parts; it has carefully studied most but by no means all of the parts; it has not tried to fit the parts together. But the stories I want to tell cannot be told intelligently unless their national orientation is made clear.

My narrative covers a period when the future of the American nation was precipitated out of the possible by the actions of the people we deal with. All the actions it narrates were initiated, and most of them were completed, within the compass of a single calendar year, 1846.

Yet all this is said in general, abstract terms and our focus is rather the lives of certain men, women, and children who went West in 1846 — some emigrants, some soldiers, some refugees, some adventurers, and various heroes, villains, manipulators, bystanders, and supernumeraries. It is required of you only to bear in mind that, while one group is spotlighted, the others are not isolated from it in national significance.

BERNARD DeVOTO grew up in Ogden, Utah, at the foot of the Wasatch Mountains, surrounded, as he says, "by Mormon pioneers and other veterans of the West, miners, bullwhackers, cowboys, desert runners, prospectors, Indian fighters." The story of the frontier, he took in through his pores. He camped and fished in the mountains, worked on a ranch through which ran ruts of the California trail, and wrote his first piece about the Diggers while he was still in high school. He began his systematic study of the Southwest after the Armistice, and from that time to this the Oregon Trail, the Mormon migration, the annexation of Texas, the Donner party, and the deeds of the mountain men were the exploits which his mind worked on year after year. Here is what Manifest Destiny meant to us.

Two years before, — in 1844, — the first telegraph line brought word to Washington that the Democratic convention, meeting in Baltimore, had voted to require a two-thirds majority for nomination. The rule was voted to stop the comeback of Martin Van Buren, who had a majority, and the vote revealed that the ex-President had defeated himself when he refused to support the annexation of Texas. Smoke-filled rooms in boardinghouses scorned President Tyler, who had betrayed the Democratic Party, and would not take Calhoun, General Cass, Silas Wright, or anyone else who had been clearly identified with any of the factions that were badly straining the party. If factionalism could be quelled, this was certainly going to be the Democracy's year — the convention's bet was that the annexation of Texas was an unbeatable issue. Factionalism was quelled by the elimination of every prominent Democrat who had taken a firm stand on anything. So presently the telegraph announced that Gideon Pillow, Cave Johnson, and George Bancroft, with the indorsement of Old Hickory in the Hermitage, had brought the delegates to agree on the first dark horse ever nominated for the Presidency, Mr. Pillow's former law partner, James K. Polk.

"Who is James K. Polk?" The Whigs promptly began campaigning on that derision, and there were Democrats who repeated it with a sick concern. The question eventually got an unequivocal answer. Polk was a wheel horse. He had been Jackson's mouthpiece and floor leader in the House of Representatives, had managed the anti-Bank legislation, had risen to the Speakership, had been governor of Tennessee. Polk's mind was rigid, narrow, obstinate, far from first-rate. He sincerely believed that only Democrats were truly American, Whigs being either the dupes or the pensioners of England — more, that not only wisdom and patriotism were Democratic

monopolies but honor and breeding as well. "Although a Whig, he seems a gentleman" is a not uncommon characterization in his diary. He was pompous, suspicious, and secretive; he had no humor; he could be vindictive; and he saw spooks and villains. He was a representative Southern politician of that period which expired with his Presidency.

But if his mind was narrow it was also powerful and he had guts. If he was orthodox, his integrity was absolute and he could not be scared, manipulated, or brought to heel. No one bluffed him, no one moved him with direct or oblique pressure. Furthermore, he knew how to get things done, which is the first necessity of government, and he knew what he wanted done, which is the second. He came into office with clear ideas and a fixed determination, and he was to stand by them through as strenuous an administration as any before Lincoln's. Congress had governed the United States for eight years before him and, after a fashion, was to govern it for the next twelve years after him. But Polk was to govern the United States from 1845 to 1849. He was to be the only "strong" President between Jackson and Lincoln. He was to fix the mold of the future in America down to 1860, and therefore for a long time afterward. That is who James K. Polk was.

The Whigs nominated Henry Clay. When Van Buren opposed the annexation of Texas, he did so from conviction. Clay had few convictions that an opportunity could not readjust. This time he guessed wrong, by guessing too cleverly. Smart politics have always been admired in America, but they must not be too smart. Clay faced obliquely away from annexation, saw that he had guessed wrong, found too clever a way out of the ropes he had knotted round his wrists, and got nowhere. The Democrats swept the nation, and the Americans clearly wanted Texas and Oregon. Polk read the popular mind better than his advisers did, and it was Polk's belief that the Americans wanted also the vast and almost unknown area called New Mexico and California.

They did: the energy and desire known as expansionism were at white heat again, the election of '44 made clear, after a long period of quiescence. This reawakening, which was to give historians a pleasant phrase, "The Roaring Forties," contained some extremely realistic ingredients. There went into expansionism romance, Utopianism, and the dream that man might yet be free. And also the logic of geography, which any map made quite as clear to the Americans of '46 as it is clear to anyone today.

You would experience a gnawing feeling of incompleteness and even insecurity today if you looked at a map of the United States in which Oregon, Washington, and Idaho were colored to represent joint occupation with a foreign nation, and all the area south of them and eastward to Texas and the Arkansas River was marked foreign territory. Both the incompleteness and the insecurity were a good deal more real to every American who looked at a map in '44. And finally, expansionism had acquired an emotion that was new — or at least a new combination. The Americans had always devoutly believed that the manifest superiority of their institutions, their government, and their mode of life would eventually spread, by inspiration and imitation, to less fortunate, less happy peoples. That devotion now took a new phase: it was perhaps the American destiny to spread our free and admirable institutions by action as well as by example, by occupying territory as well as by practicing virtue. For the sum of these feelings, a Democratic editor found, in the summer of '45, one of the most dynamic phrases ever coined, "Manifest Destiny."

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As the instrument of Manifest Destiny, Polk entered office facing the possibility of two wars. The one which he regarded as the more likely would have been with Great Britain over the unsettled question of conflicting British and American claims to Oregon. Actually there was only the remotest possibility of such a war, and the war which was all but inevitable was the one Polk supposed he could avoid by negotiation, threats, or bribery: war with Mexico over Texas.

For nine years the Republic of Texas had successfully defended the independence which it had declared in 1836 — but which Mexico had never recognized. For nine years a variety of reasons had balked its inevitable annexation to the United States, which had had to await the reawakening of expansionism. Rightly interpreting Polk's election as a signal of that reawakening, President Tyler had promptly moved to annex it. He failed to get a two-thirds vote in the Senate for annexation by treaty but, in the closing hours of his administration, he put it through by joint resolution. Though Texas did not ratify it until July and was not formally a State of the Union till December, it was, in Polk's mind on March 4, 1845, a part of the United States and was to be defended.

Since we had annexed a boundary dispute as well as a State, there remained the question of just what Texas was. Part of that ancient

question involved a strip some one hundred and twenty miles wide between the Nueces River, on the north, and the Rio Grande. Texas claimed this almost uninhabited strip, and though the claim was purely metaphysical it could be useful to a President who was thinking beyond Texas to California.

Therefore in mid-June, 1845, six months before Texas became a State, Polk ordered the army under Zachary Taylor to take a position south of the Nueces — cautioning him, however, to treat with punctilious consideration any Mexican troops he might encounter. Between three and four thousand troops had been concentrated at Fort Jesup, Louisiana, with precisely this step in mind. By the end of July, Taylor got his forces to Corpus Christi, a minute Mexican seacoast village just inside the disputed strip. Polk understood that this was not an invasion; it was a protective occupation.

In his mind a protective occupation was not war. He thought clearly about many things, but not about war. Fifteen years short of Fort Sumter, there was no one in America who thought clearly about it. War was militia muster day, it was volunteers shooting Seminoles in the Florida swamps, it was farmers blowing redcoats to hell from behind stonewalls; most of all it was embattled frontiersmen slaughtering Wellington's veterans at New Orleans. It was a vague glory, rhetoric, and at bottom something that did not imply bloodshed. Polk was disposed to believe that the Americans could win their war without fighting it. He believed that he could settle the question of Texas without fighting and that he could use it as a leverage for the acquisition of California. If there was no other way of getting California, he was willing to accept war with Mexico, but he opened with the diplomatic arm. Diplomatic relations with Mexico had been broken off immediately on the passage of the joint resolution for the annexation of Texas, the Mexican minister demanding his passport. So, in November of '45, Polk appointed John Slidell envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary to Mexico.

It is a fundamental mistake to think of Mexico, in this period or for many years before, as a republic or even as a government. It must be understood as a late stage in the breakdown of the Spanish Empire. Throughout that time it was never able to establish a stability, whether social or political. Abortive, discordant movements of revolution or counter-revolution followed one another in a meaningless succession and ran down in chaos from which no governing class ever arose, or even a political party, but only some

gangs. Sometimes the gangs were captained by intelligent and capable men; sometimes for a while they stood for the merchants, the clergy, the landowners, or various programs of reform; but they all came in the end to simple plunder. Furthermore, the portions of Mexico with which we are concerned, Texas, New Mexico, and California, were precisely the portions where Spain's imperial energy had faltered and run down. To this frontier Great Spain had come and here it could go no farther, here it began to ebb. It had succeeded most in the genial California lands, but not much and long ago; much less in New Mexico; least of all in Texas. Stephen W. Kearny and Alexander Doniphan brought more safety, stability, and hope to the New Mexicans in two months than Spain had found for them in two centuries, or Mexico after Spain. The annexation of Texas was a tragedy to some Mexicans, but not for Mexico. It was the last episode, under the hard facts of climate and geography, in the erosion of an empire.

Slidell was to explain Polk's propositions. The Monroe Doctrine was to be reaffirmed throughout the hemisphere. Mexico was to pay the claims against her made by American citizens, which a commission had adjudicated. The Rio Grande was to be acknowledged as the boundary of Texas. It was made clear that we would not pay a cent for Texas but, when the claims should be acknowledged and the boundary established, the United States would assume the claims and pay them. Furthermore, if Mexico would accept the Rio Grande as the boundary throughout its length, that is to say north as well as east of El Paso (the modern Juarez), the United States would add five million dollars.

The propositions were sophisticated. The claims, on which a legal case for war might be rested, were an adjudicated two million dollars out of a much larger sum which American citizens said they were owed, mostly for damage, confiscations, and loss of life during a quarter century of Mexican revolutions. Mexico, forever bankrupt, could pay them only in land. But any Mexican government which might cede territory to the United States would — and the Herrera government did on the mere rumor at the end of December — stop governing at once. The bland offer for the eastern half of New Mexico was unrealistic, a mere talking point. Furthermore, the idea that Texas extended west as well as south to the Rio Grande was not even metaphysical. The Texans had positively asserted it just once, in 1841, when they sent a diplomatic and marauding expedition toward Santa Fe. The New Mexicans cut it to pieces, slaughtered some

of its members, imprisoned others, and nailed the ears of still others to the Governor's Palace. There followed guerrilla episodes which made the word *Tejano* as odious in Santa Fe as it was south of the border, and were to keep New Mexico quite untempted by the solicitations of the Confederate States of America in '61.

3

Clearly these proposals were spacious enough to swing a cat in. The cat was not New Mexico, as might appear on the surface, but California.

West of the lands purchased from France in 1803 there was "Oregon," there was "New Mexico," and there was "California." In 1844 Sam Houston, then ending his second term as President of Texas, drew a map. It showed the domain his nation was eventually to occupy, the extent of its manifest destiny, if the movement for annexation to the United States should fail. This map has its merit as prophecy. Texas was to include "Oregon," "New Mexico," and "California." It was also to include the Mexican state of Chihuahua, and thence westward to the Pacific. And also it was to include Arkansas, Louisiana, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, the Carolinas, and Virginia. In short, the Republic of Texas was to cover, besides some territory which we know as Mexico, precisely the extent of the Far West and the Confederate States of America.

Some part of the slavery bloc unquestionably hoped to make a reality of Houston's map, and before the peace treaty in 1848 and intermittently throughout the succeeding decade there were occasional, isolated, and altogether visionary notions of taking parts or even all of the present Mexico. But in 1846, in even the most extreme facets of Southern expansionism California was still only a dream. Exactly the same dream was implicit in Northern expansionism. Linn, Benton, and Allen, all the warhawks, wanted California, or at least wanted San Francisco bay. John Quincy Adams, who had said that there were laws of politics as fixed as the laws of mechanics, and they would bring Cuba tumbling into our lap like Newton's apple — Adams had wanted California and had warmly advocated acquiring it till, like some other expansionists who changed their minds, he had a premonition of its bearing on slavery. Andrew Jackson had even tried to buy California. His envoy had advised him to take it by guile or force — and hardly a year passed without some enthusiast repeating the suggestion in Congress. Oregon, which was wilderness with a thin

population of immigrants, where there were only the fur trade and the slight, precarious trade which the immigrants had been able to organize — Oregon was completely known. Traders, merchants, sailors, trappers, military explorers, missionaries, and gentlemen adventurers had sedulously publicized it. Polk need only send to the Library of Congress or the War Department for any information he might want.

But there was astonishing ignorance of the far older, far richer, far more populous province of California. Little was known about the land, and even less about the genial, pleasant, hospitable life lived westward of the Sierra. There was not even a detailed or dependable map of California, and hardly a trustworthy description, in English, of any part east of the coastal towns. The War Department had a handful of reports, fragmentary, inaccurate; it is not clear that Polk knew they existed. There was a book or two: the President had not read them. Lately the State Department had made a shrewd and intelligent merchant, Thomas O. Larkin, consul at Monterey, and his reports were the one dependable source of information available.

Polk, who was willing to fight a war for California if necessary, knew nothing about it. He was the dream finding an instrument. An anxiety hurried him. If the tension with Mexico developed into a war, might not California, which remained bound to Mexico by a gossamer only, if at all, seek a protectorate under Britain? It seemed likely; nor was a French or even a Prussian protectorate altogether impossible. In fact, there were native movements in California not only for independence but for a foreign protectorate. Again, since we were now going to face the Oregon question, might not Great Britain seize California to strengthen both her military and her diplomatic position in Oregon? Plenty of sober minds besides Polk's thought so, and behind that dread was one which the new nation had inherited in 1785 from as far back as there had been white men in America: the dread that Europe might set a limit to our development.

So in June, 1845, Bancroft, as Secretary of the Navy, sent secret and confidential instructions to Commodore John D. Sloat, an elderly invalid who commanded the Pacific Squadron. If Sloat should learn that Mexico and the United States were at war, he was to seize the harbor of San Francisco and blockade the other ports of California. Meanwhile, whether or not we were to have war, there were other expedients looking toward the same end. So, in October, James Buchanan, the Secretary of State, sent secret and confidential instructions to Thomas Larkin, at

Monterey, who had been made consul for precisely this purpose. They came to this: taking advantage of any native revolutionary movements he might observe (there were always a number), Larkin was to do everything in his power to induce the Californians to break the gossamer that held them to Mexico and set up for themselves; then he was to guide them into asking for annexation to the United States.

Buchanan's instructions to Larkin were sent in the frigate *Congress* by way of Cape Horn and the Sandwich Islands. Also a copy of them was entrusted to Lieutenant Archibald H. Gillespie of the Marine Corps, who was ordered to travel by boat to Vera Cruz, overland across Mexico to the Pacific, and thence to Honolulu and on to Monterey. At 8 p.m. on October 30, 1845, Polk had a "confidential conversation" with Lieutenant Gillespie at the White House. What he said during that conversation was not confided to his diary, and historians have been arguing about it for years. Gillespie sailed four days later and, though no one knew it, Polk least of all, the conquest of California had begun.

Furthermore, Lieutenant Gillespie was instructed to seek out Brevet Captain John Charles Frémont, of the United States Topographical Engineers, who was expected to be in or near California, at the head of an exploring expedition, and who was the son-in-law of Senator Benton. He carried private letters from Benton and Frémont's wife.

Frémont had left St. Louis in June of '45 on his third exploration of the West, instructed to map the central watershed of the Rockies, to complete his examination of Great Salt Lake, and to obtain information about the Cascade and Sierra Nevada mountains. He would thus be traversing Oregon or California at a critical time, and if there seems to be a certain convenience in having an army officer and sixty armed men on hand, let it stand.

4

The war which the President, the Congressional warhawks, and the jingo press expected, however, was to be with Great Britain and it involved the question of the extent of Oregon. That extremely involved controversy can be reduced to a simple statement. Russian claims to any part of the west coast south of 54° 40' (the southern tip of Alaska) had been extinguished by treaty. All Spanish claims to land north of 42° had been ceded to the United States. The conflicting British and American claims to the land between those two boundaries and west of the continental divide had not been

settled; the lands were jointly occupied, each nation having the right to terminate the agreement at a year's notice. The extreme American position held that Oregon was ours to the boundary of the Russian lands, 54° 40'. The extreme British position was that we had no valid claim north of the Columbia River. We had several times offered to compromise on the 49th parallel, which was the boundary east of the Rockies, but the British had refused since this would have cut them off from the southern end of Vancouver Island and denied them access by the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

Originally willing to fight for 54° 40', Polk cooled down as he began to realize the gravity of the Mexican crisis, but by this time the campaign had inflamed both American and British passions. Orators who had twisted the lion's tail on the stump went on twisting it in Congress, and their defiance roused the hair-trigger contempt of the English for Brother Jonathan. The right questions were asked in Parliament and there was a bustle of activity in naval ports. This badly frightened James Buchanan, the Secretary of State, a gentleman politician of great shrewdness but no backbone whatever, and it added realism to Polk's ideas. The President saw that relations with Great Britain had drifted into a crisis and must not be allowed to drift any longer. So through the summer of '45 he tried to negotiate a settlement at the 49th parallel. But Pakenham, the British minister, not only understood the powerful leverage of the intensifying Mexican crisis but was bound at first by the traditional policy of his country: when an opponent offers concessions, you can get bigger ones by holding out.

British firmness threw Buchanan into a panic and from then on he was for appeasement. Polk was not frightened and Pakenham's adroitness had made him mad. He saw that the minister was playing diplomatics by the textbook, and he too knew the rules. So in late August of '45 he notified Pakenham that, following the refusal of Her Majesty's government to accept the compromise, he no longer felt bound by the policy of his predecessors and hereafter would not be interested in any offer short of the whole of Oregon up to 54° 40'. Then on December 2, in his message to Congress, he played his ace. He asked Congress to sanction the termination of the joint occupation of Oregon by empowering him to give the formal one year's notice now. He summarized his efforts to settle the controversy, rehearsed the British refusals to compromise, and took occasion to restate the Monroe Doctrine at such length that, acquiring

additional point from Texas and California, it began to develop the binding force it has exercised ever since. And he said that we had "reached a period when the national rights in Oregon must either be abandoned or firmly maintained." Also that "they cannot be abandoned without a sacrifice of honor and interest."

That was war talk and was received as such at home and abroad. Mass meetings blossomed across the country, Polk was a hero in the Middle West for the first time, and the War and Navy Departments consulted with Congressional committees to prepare war measures. Buchanan's alarm was increased and he warned the President that the country, which was supporting 54° 40' with a sustained roar, would not support it. On January 4, 1846, Representative Black of South Carolina called at the White House to plead with the President to recede from his stand. Polk replied

that the only way to treat John Bull was to look him straight in the face; that I considered a bold & firm course on our part the pacific one; that if Congress faulted or hesitated in their course, John Bull would immediately become arrogant and more grasping in his demands & that such had been the history of the British Nation in all their contests with other Powers for the last two hundred years.

Polk had reached bedrock in British-American relations. It may be said that he not only looked John Bull in the face but struck him on the head with a blunt instrument, but he had the right idea. While Buchanan trembled and a second thought began perceptibly to sober Congress and the press, he tranquilly waited for England to settle on his original terms. He prepared one of the ingenuities that enable Presidents to back down without losing face. When John Bull was ready to accept 49°, he would, he decided, invoke a clause of the Constitution which it is usually the first concern of the administration to avoid. He would submit the anticipated offer to the Senate, not for its "consent" but for its "advice." By that time developments in Mexico could be counted on to put the Senate in a mood to advise the compromise.

5

"Many weeks of hardships, close trials, and anxieties have tried me severely, and my hair is turning gray before its time. But all this passes, *et le bon temps viendra*." Thus Frémont, Childe Harold's American heir, writing to his wife from Yerba Buena, on the bay of San Francisco, January 24, 1846. And, receiving the letter in Washington, Jessie Benton Frémont grieves:

"Poor papa, it made tears come to find you had begun to turn gray. [He was thirty-three.] You must have suffered much and been very anxious 'but all that must pass.' . . . I have not had so much pleasure in a very great while as today. The thought that you may hear from me and know that all are well and that I can tell you again how dearly I love you makes me as happy as I can be while you are away."

Young Francis Parkman found it natural to prefix quotations from *Childe Harold* to the chapters of his book. But it was in the person of John Charles Frémont that the nation's enthusiasm for the poetry of Lord Byron found a career. Greatness was a burden on Childe Harold's soul. Born in high romance outside the law, he had grown up a young Rousseau. He had found a profession plotting the wilderness for the Topographical Corps. His native poetry responded to the solitudes and he had mastered the skilled crafts of living there. If his father's romance was out of Alexandre Dumas, his own was out of Italian opera. It rose in a fine cadenza when, secretly married to Jessie, the beautiful, blue-stocking daughter of Thomas Hart Benton, he stood before the Senator to announce defiance of his will. Old Bullion's rage had been known continentally ever since he had shot it out with Andrew Jackson in a community brawl. It now turned on Frémont, but to violins Jessie stepped forward and sang her aria, "Whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge." Benton, who was one of the best-educated men in Congress, surrendered to a literary allusion.

An obscure lieutenant of topographical engineers had become the son-in-law of the most formidable Senator—and greatness got the assistance of a national spotlight. He was put in command of two explorations of the West, whose true purpose was to publicize the Oregon country that was seldom out of Benton's mind. The first took him to South Pass and a little beyond; the second to Oregon and, looping back, to California by a winter crossing of the Sierra. He proved himself a first-rate wilderness commander, learning his new trade from two of its masters, Kit Carson and Tom Fitzpatrick. He traveled little country that his instructors had not had by heart for twenty years, blazed no trails, though the Republicans were to run him for the Presidency as the Pathfinder, and did very little of importance except to determine the latitude and longitude of many sites which the mountain men knew how to find only by habit. But he learned his skills well, was tireless in exploration and survey, and enjoyed himself.

Also he was a literary man, and the Thunderer

was his father-in-law. Benton roared in the Senate, his colleague Linn and the other expansionists chimed in, and Frémont had given the West to the American people. With Jessie's eager help, he wrote his two reports, and the westering nation read them hungrily in the early 1840's. The government sowed them broadcast. Frémont chasing buffalo, Galahad Carson reclaiming the orphaned boy's horses from the Indians, Odysseus Godey riding charge against hordes of the red butchers — there was here a spectacle that fed the nation's deepest need. They were adventure books, they were charters of Manifest Destiny, they were texts of navigation for the uncharted sea so many dreamed of crossing, they were a pageant of daring, endurance, and high endeavor in the country of peaks and unknown rivers. With Benton's advertising, they made Frémont an image of our western wayfaring.

We have recorded the start of his third expedition, with Carson as adjutant again, and such other mountain men as Dick Owens, Alexis Godey, and Basil Lajeunesse. The usefulness of that expedition to Polk is quite clear: on the frontier of Oregon and California there would be an army officer and sixty armed men, most of them thirty-third degree mountain men.

In January, greatness burgeoned in Frémont's soul. He had reached a great stage, and time was on the march. It might be that some great deed could be done. And from then on to the end of his life he was to go, forever subtly, astray. Nothing came out quite the way it should have; Lord Byron, who had imagined him, could not make him rhyme.

He had reached Sutter's Fort (the site of Sacramento) on December 9 of '45, after the outstanding exploration of his career which broke a trail across the salt desert west of Great Salt Lake to Ogden's or Mary's River, which Frémont renamed the Humboldt. At the Humboldt he sent the larger part of his force into California by a southerly and known route, and with ten picked Delawares and mountain men went on to force a winter crossing of the Sierra. The venture was foolhardy, was disapproved by Carson, served only Frémont's consciousness of brave deeds — and beat the snows by just a day or two. He and his gaunt, worn, half-starved companions came down into the great green valley. Sutter clothed and fed them, and they waited at New Helvetia for the larger party.

It delayed, having misunderstood the rendezvous appointed. Frémont had reached his theater now and he was restless. He marched his little group vaguely toward Oregon, whither he

had been ordered, turned back to Sutter's again (past a site on the American River where Sutter had considered building a sawmill), and on January 14 started south to find his larger party. He met some of the California Indians who lived on horses stolen from their decayed relatives, the mission peons. So he redressed an injury they had done him two years before; Owens, Carson, and the Delawares got fresh scalps for their leggings in three sharp, unnecessary skirmishes. It was at least a theatrical deed, but not judicious. There had arrived in California, from a Mexican government that feared war, orders to warn out of the province all foreigners who were not licensed to hold land. The warning had not been issued but had produced unrest. And now a foreigner, accompanied by the mountain men whom the Californians knew from years of forays on their horse herds, was marching through their province killing Indians. To what end? If he meant to produce nothing more, did he mean to produce an Indian war?

6

It was spring in California. The rains had wrought their resurrection and Jim Clyman, a master mountain man, "noticed the manseneto trees in full Bloom . . . an evergreen shrub growing in a thick gnarled clump . . . and would make a beautiful shade for a door yard." And "fine growing weather verry much resembling a Missouri April or an Eastern May."

But in Missouri and the East it was winter still, an uncommon hard winter, the prairies under snow, frost deep in the ground, the wind whistling by from the north, the boughs of trees firing pistol shots when they moved in it. Short gray days, long twilights, long nights. A season suspended, the pulse sluggish, the stock stamping in the barn, time to finish jobs, time for talking.

They talked in country stores, at the post offices, in the kitchens of farmhouses — along the Sangamon, in the Western Reserve, in the bluegrass country, under the shadow of Mount Equinox. The little weeklies — *Journal*, *Sentinel*, *Freedom's Herald* — reprinted what the *Union* said about Texas, the *National Intelligencer's* dread of the British fleet, a summary of "Are We to Have Peace or War?" from *Niles' Register*. Gittin' on to war, I guess. Polk's bound to take no sass from Johnny Bull, no, nor the Greasers, neither. Or — Polk's set to make us fight a war if he can't get slave territory noways else. ("They just want this Californy So's to lug new slave states in, To abuse ye an' to

scorn ye, An' to plunder ye like sin.") They talked very much like Thomas Hart Benton, James Buchanan, Daniel Webster, Abraham Lincoln, Whitman, Emerson, Charles Dana, Henry Thoreau. Fist on the table, Pa brought the verdict in. Dave listened and had his say, and Ma looked at Dave, a firstborn son whom President Polk might send to war.

But war was far away, hazy, muffled by distance. Whereas here at hand, in the Sangamon country or in the Green Mountains, next to Perkins's store or half a mile up the crick, someone who might be named, say, Bill Bowen had sold his place. Or Bill had turned his place over to young Bill, a stiddy boy. Bill and Mother and four of the boys were going West.

Strange paraphernalia gathered in the Bowen barn and the beginning of a granary that could have seen the family through a famine year. At least two hundred pounds of flour or meal per person, the *Guide* said — *The Emigrants' Guide to Oregon and California* by Lansford W. Hastings. All the Bowens thumbed that small volume, arguing, verifying, refuting. Twenty pounds of sugar, ten pounds of salt . . . everyone will require at least twice as much as he would need at home, since there will be no vegetables . . . some buffalo can be counted on — and along the icebound Sangamon young Bill Bowen rides down the shaggy, fabulous beast . . . such goods for the Indian trade as beads, tobacco, handkerchiefs, cheap pantaloons, butcher knives, fishhooks — so young Bill and Nancy and Henry Clay and Joe will offer fishhooks to a feathered topknot beside the streams of fable. That topknot looks just like Tecumseh or Pontiac, and the streams of fable, the Platte, the Snake, the Big Sandy, are such known rivers as the Sangamon, the Connecticut, the Miami. When the wind howls over the rooftop, it seems impossible that, come summer, Bill and Nancy Bowen will be unyoking oxen while the "caral" forms on the banks of the Sweetwater, but they will be, for on page 147 Mr. Hastings says so.

Hastings was a Lilliputian Frémont. Rumors connected him — falsely — with the Mormons and, on more substantial ground, with revolutionary intrigues. Whatever he designed, he lacked stuff. Put him down as a smart young man who wrote a book without knowing what he was talking about — as the first of the Escrow Indians, the first head of the California Chamber of Commerce, the first Booster on the golden shore. He went from his home town, Mount Vernon, Ohio, to Oregon in 1842. He found no opening for his talents in that sober commonwealth and moved on to California. He wrote a

prospectus and took it East in 1844. It was published at Cincinnati in 1845, had an immediate popularity, and Hastings went back to California.

"Here perpetual summer is in the midst of unceasing winter; perennial spring and never failing autumn stand side by side, and towering snow clad mountains forever look down upon eternal verdure." Tell Bill Bowen, plunging between frozen walls of snow to lug in endless armfuls of hickory lengths, that no fires are needed in California except to cook by, and those usually outdoors. Mother's knuckles are gnarled and stiff with rheumatism begotten by the prairie winters — but by that purple sea it is warmer in winter than in summer, and even in December vegetation is in full bloom. (My sakes! hollyhocks, sweet william, carnation pinks at Christmas time!) Aunt Esther is racked by chills and fever every autumn, her thin shoulders wrapped with a shawl even in August. But "there being no low, marshy regions, the noxious miasmatic effluvia . . . is here nowhere found." And "While all this region . . . is entirely exempt from all febrific causes, it is also entirely free from all sudden changes and extreme variableness of climate or other causes of catarrhal or consumptive affections." So Aunt Esther can ease her tired old bones there, and Nancy will not sniffle all winter long, and pink will come back to little Bob's cheeks, they will not have to watch him die of lung fever, after all.

And young Bill, chipping at the frozen droppings of the cows, may know that California stock require neither feeding nor housing, nor other care, nor any expense. Moreover, Mr. Hastings has seen oats half an inch through the stalk and eight feet high, thousands of acres at a stretch. Clover grown to five feet, covering the hills with natural hay. A single stalk of wheat forms seven heads and the grain runs four pounds to the bushel heavier than any the Bowens know. Seventy bushels to the acre, often up to a hundred and twenty bushels — and next year sixty-one bushels spontaneously, with no sowing at all. Also two crops in one twelvemonth, and up to sixty bushels of corn per acre, and wild flax waves as far as the eye can see, and the soil grows everything — tobacco, rice, cotton, crab-apples, plums, strawberries the largest and most delicious in the world, peaches blooming in January, such grapes as you cannot believe in.

Bill Bowen would not be able to identify certain optimisms in Hastings's book. The advertiser told him too confidently that there was no scarcity of fuel east of the Platte, that all the streams he would cross were easily fordable,

that buffalo would be plentiful for hundreds of miles beyond the Rockies and could be herded like cattle, that the California Indians were inoffensive, and so on. Publicity is the art of omission; and besides, Hastings had to trump Oregon, which drew most of the emigration. There were few difficulties, he said, till you reached the place where the road forked. On the Oregon fork the travel became dreadful at once — and even if you survived it you would only have Oregon. Some remarks here about five months of rain and sleet, whereas rain in California was California rain. They read that in the Sangamon country. They also read the barker's pleasant suggestion that a fine way to shorten the trip would be to try a route which Mr. Hastings had so far been too busy to try (and no one had yet broken), a possible cutoff from Fort Bridger to the southern end of Great Salt Lake and thence due west to Ogden's River. The saving of several hundred laborious miles read well on a winter evening in the kitchen.

7

Much more widely read, Frémont's was a much better book. It knew what it was talking about, and when Bill Bowen read that there was wood or water in a given place, or good soil, or difficult travel, he could count on it. The myth of the Great American Desert went down before this literary man's examination — and before his vision of cities rising in wasteland and the emptiness filling with fat farms. It was filled with solid facts that solid minds could use: it told about the winds, the water, the timber, the soil, the weather. It was extraordinarily seeing and intelligent, astonishingly accurate. In the book he wrote, Frémont deserves well of the Republic.

But the book had a greater importance: it fed desire. The wilderness, which was so close to Frémont's heart that he has dignity only when he is traveling it, was the core of the nation's oldest dream. Kit Carson, Tom Fitzpatrick, Alexis Godey, Basil Lajeunesse, his mountain men, were this generation's embodiment of a wish that ran back beyond Daniel Boone, beyond Robert Rogers and Jonathan Carver, beyond Christopher Gist, innumerable men in buckskins, forest runners, long hunters, rivermen, *gens du nord*, the company of gentlemen and adventurers of the far side of the hill. Something older than Myles Standish or Captain John Smith fluttered a reader's pulse when the mountain men worked their prodigies before Frémont's admiring eyes. It responded to his exal-

tation when, pounding his rifle on the saddle to seat a fresh load, he charged through dust clouds at the snorting buffalo. It quickened when he reached the highest peak of the Wind River divide and there pressed in the leaves of his notebook a honey bee that was making westward. He went on — across deserts, through untrodden gulches, up slopes of aspen, over the saddle, along the ridge, down the far side. He smelled sagebrush at dawn, he smelled rivers in the evening, alkali under sun, drenched earth when a shower had passed, pines when the pollen fell, roses and sweet peas and larkspur, carrion, sulphur, the coming storm, greasewood, buffalo dung in the smoke of campfires. He saw the western country under sun, bent and swollen by mirage, stark, terrible, beautiful to the heart's longing, snow on the peaks, infinite green and the night stars.

That was what the pulse answered — and that answering pulse is the only full answer to our Why? True, Bill Bowen, reading Frémont by candlelight along the Sangamon or in the shadow of Mount Equinox, could jot down a memorandum that there was first-rate farm land along the Willamette. True, the dispossessed Mormons, scrutinizing in their beleaguered city every page he wrote, could plot a hard, dependable itinerary. But that is of the slightest, and it is not what a young man named Francis Parkman read painfully, with eyes beginning to be diseased, that winter in Boston. Or a boy named Lewis Garrard, reading him in Cincinnati and tossing away his schoolbooks because "the glowing pages of Frémont's tour to the Rocky Mountains . . . were so alluring to my fancy that my parents were persuaded to let me go westward." Or a thousand men named Bill Bowen, from Missouri eastward to Maine.

Bodies bent by the long labor of New England farms could welcome tidings that the Oregon soil was deep and without stones, in gentle weather, beside broad waters, below the brows of timbered hills; bodies sapped by malarial autumns and prairie winters could long for a California where there was neither cold nor hard work nor any distempers of the flesh. Also, neither the tariff of '42 nor all the rhetoric of Congress had succeeded in fully restoring the farmers' market which had been shattered in '37, and there was a belief that in Oregon the trade with China and the Sandwich Islands would absorb all crops that could be grown, and a further belief that a great grazing industry could be developed in both Oregon and California.

And yet the sum is far from enough to explain why, suddenly, the Americans were marching on

their last frontier — to explain the evening talk in farm kitchens in January, 1846. They believed, with Henry Thoreau, in the forest and in the meadow and in the night in which the corn grows. Eastward Thoreau went only by force; but westward, ever since Columbus dared the Ocean Sea, westward he had gone free. The lodestone of the West tugged deep in the blood, as deep as desire. When the body dies, the Book of the Dead relates, the soul is borne along the path of the setting sun. Toward that western horizon all heroes of all peoples have traveled, and beyond it have lain all Fortunate Islands. Beyond the Gates of Hercules, beyond the Ocean Sea, beyond the Tetons or the Sangre de Cristo, Lapp or Irish or Winnebago, westward lie the happy Hyperboreans, and the open country, freedom, the unknown. Westward lies the goal of effort and, if Freud and the Navajo speak true, the hole in the earth through which the soul may plunge to peace.

These people waiting for spring to come are of our myth — but think of them as hard-handed, hard-minded Americans seeking a new home in the West. And so dream-bound, so certain in desire, that James K. Polk's war seems trivial and wasted. . . . If the dream filled the desert with a thousand brooks like the one that tinkled in the east pasture, built in the Rocky Mountains a thousand white cottages like those that line a New Hampshire common, sowed alkali plains with such crops as the oak openings knew in Michigan, and sketched on the unknown a familiar countryside of rich green slopes, farm cattle lying in noon shade beside familiar pools, and the jeweled miniature of neighbors striking whetstone to scythe within a shout's reach of one another — why, they would learn about the West soon enough.

Eastward from the coastal ranges and the Cascades, all the way to the Missouri River was a big unknown. This was the country they argued about in Congress. Benton knew a great deal about it, as a lover and a scholar — as one knows who reads and dreams but has never seen his desire. Polk had some knowledge of it, thin and inaccurate, at fourth hand. Webster was very clear about the bay of San Francisco and could make speeches dizzy with the future of a sister republic somewhere in the Great American Desert, but had never bothered to find out what he was talking about. Thoreau felt this empty land as a question asked while he slept. Whitman read about it in the *Washington Union* and the lesser party press, Longfellow in Frémont, thousands of others in Frémont and in Farnham, Wyeth, Hall Kelly, Nuttall, and similar

narratives, and they also had love but not knowledge. The archives at Washington, London, Paris, Madrid, and St. Petersburg held reports on it, properly filed. . . . And the Oregon, California, and New Mexico of Polk's war and a westering people were only a quickening pulsebeat, type in slugs, movement of the vocal cords, a pulsation without substance.

Substance begins when we mention some names: the States of Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, and parts of Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana. Add the rest of the last three and add the Dakotas, Nebraska, and Kansas. Now, across the blank paper outlined by those names, sketch in some rivers: the Pecos, Gila, Rio Grande, Arkansas, Red, El Rio de las Animas Perdidas en Purgatoire (call that one the Picketwire), the Missouri, Blue, Vermilion, Platte, Niobrara, Cheyenne, Milk, Marias, Musselshell, Yellowstone, Jefferson, Madison, Gallatin, Okanagan, Columbia, Snake, Sacramento, Feather, San Joaquin, Humboldt, Virgin, Bear, Green, Grand, Colorado of the West. Now from a station high above Long's Peak observe those streams emptying the fundamental watershed, the snows of a few square miles diversely rolled down the Madison to the Gulf of Mexico, down the Colorado to the Gulf of California, down the Snake to the Pacific, down the Bear to Great Salt Lake, down the Humboldt to the alkali desert. From that same station, sketch on the blank paper the continental divide from Canada to Mexico and attach to that spine various peaks and ranges: the Flatheads, the Big Belts, the Absarokas, the Tetons, the Wind Rivers, the Laramies, the Medicine Bows, the Black Hills, the Rabbit Ears, the Sawatch, the San Juan, the Cochetopas, the Sangre de Cristo, the Spanish Peaks, the Ratons, the Sierra Blanca, the Los Piños, the Tulerosas, the Piloncillos, the Blacks, the Sierra Nevada, the Coast Range, the Cascades, the Blues, the Seven Devils, the Bitterroots, the Sawtooths, the Wasatch, the Uintas.

A big country. Whose was it?

8

Outline of American history. James Clyman was born in Fauquier County, Virginia, in 1792, during the administration of George Washington, on a farm that belonged to the President, whom he saw in the flesh. He died on his ranch at Napa, California, in 1881, during the administration of Chester Arthur. Jim Clyman was a man who went West.

He was fifteen when his father became a mover, first to Pennsylvania, then to Ohio. The family settled in Stark County just when William Henry Harrison shattered the Shawnee under the Prophet at Tippecanoe, in 1811. Next year the Indians were up again, and Clyman, already a practiced frontiersman, became a ranger. This war merged with the troubles of 1812-1814, and he was both a volunteer and a regular. After the war his needle settled west. He cleared a planting in Indiana and traded with the local Indians. By 1821 he was a surveyor, working toward the Vermilion River of Illinois. Alexander Hamilton's son, who was running government surveys, hired him to make traverses along the Sangamon. Clyman was back on the Sangamon the next summer, 1822.

In the spring of 1823 he went to St. Louis to collect his pay. There he met William H. Ashley, whose company of trappers and traders was to open the Great Basin. Clyman joined the Ashley expedition of 1823, the second one. Thus he began to shape the future of the United States. And thus he became a mountain man.

Foremost of all American explorations was the one begun by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark at St. Louis just nineteen years before Clyman went there to get his pay. Second only to it in brilliance and importance were the explorations made by the employees of William Ashley — lead miner, lieutenant governor of Missouri, general of its militia, member of Congress, student and propagandist of the West, expansionist — during the two years after Clyman joined him.

Between Benton or Polk or Longfellow and the West stretched a black curtain of the unimaginable, but the mountain men knew the country. They took Frémont across it in comfort, showing the Pathfinder paths they had had by heart for twenty years. They took Lansford Hastings through the West, and Kearny, Abert, Cooke, all the officers, all the travelers. They made the trails.

From 1823 to 1827 Clyman was in the mountains with Ashley's men. He fought in the battle with the Aricara that made Ashley determine to forsake the known road to the West, the river route which Lewis and Clark and their successors had traveled, and to blaze a trail south of the dangerous Indians, an overland trail, the trail up the valley of the Platte by which the entire emigration was to move. He was with Jedediah Smith and Thomas Fitzpatrick when they made such a trail possible by finding South Pass, the one opening through which wagons could cross the mountains, the door to Oregon and Cali-

fornia, the true Northwest Passage. He was one of the party of four who paddled round Great Salt Lake, and so laid forever the old myth of the River Buenaventura which was supposed to flow salt water westward to San Francisco bay — though the Pathfinder still half believed it twenty years later. . . . But these are details and the whole is vastly greater than its parts. From 1823 to 1827, Clyman was a mountain man and a good one, a peer of Carson, Fitzpatrick, Bridger, Harris, Provost, Ogden, the Sublettes, Fontenelle, or any of the other resounding names.

Unlike most of his fellows he saved money and came out of the mountains. He bought a farm near Danville, Illinois, and set up a store. This is the phase of prairie farming while the land fills up. Then Illinois rose to the Black Hawk War, and Clyman joined Captain Early's company. This is an outline of American history: another private in Captain Early's backwoods fusileers was named Abe Lincoln. Still another private of that company is a person of our drama, James Frazier Reed. Born in Ireland of a noble Polish line, Reed settled near the Sangamon, made money, and in 1846 helped a townsman of his, George Donner, organize a wagon train for California. In June we shall see Clyman, moving eastward, meet him after fourteen years, in a moment of decision at Fort Laramie.

There was dysentery but no battle during the glorious two years of the Black Hawk War. When it was over, the country had filled up and the mountain man's blood was uneasy. . . . In July of '46, having said good-bye to Reed, Clyman moved eastward along the trail he had helped to blaze and came to the grave of Reed's mother-in-law, who had died when her family neared the Blue on its westward journey. He meditated beside the grave: "This stone shews us that all ages and all sects are found to undertake this long tedious and even dangerous Journey for some unknown object never to be realized even by those the most fortunate. And why? because the human mind can never be satisfied never at rest always on the stretch for something new some strange novelty." . . . Black Hawk's fangs drawn and Illinois getting crowded, Clyman's mind was "on the stretch" in 1835.

That year they were opening up Wisconsin. Clyman filed a claim where Milwaukee was to sprout. But settlers rushed in and he fled northward to the shadowy timber along Green Bay. He had fought the Blackfeet in their forbidden lands and all the shock troops of the plains — Aricara, Sioux, Pawnee, Kiowa. None had counted coup on him. Compared to them, the Winnebago were sissy Indians, but now a Winne-

bago counted coup — shooting Clyman with his own gun and driving him into a forty-eight hour flight through rain and forest. But he survived.

There followed six peaceful years on his timber claim and at his Danville store. He was called "Colonel," the settlements rightly conferring the command of a regiment on anyone who came back from the West.

Clyman was fifty-two and had half a volume of American history behind him. He caught a cold, there was no healing for it in the Wisconsin winter, and as the spring of '44 came on, taking his water spaniel with him, he set out on horseback from Milwaukee to seek recovery in softer weather. His needle settled southwest and he rode into Independence. There had been no Independence in his time — at best only some scattered cabins in the Indian country. But the Independence he saw in '44 was a frontier metropolis, rich, noisy, cosmopolitan, lively with the commerce of the prairies. It was boiling with an energy new under the sun, families with their oxen and their kine forming wagon companies to cross the mountains to a new home in the West. He found two old companions, Ashley's men both, serving these companies in a new role, as guides. Bill Sublette, whom the Indians called Cut Face, was taking a party of invalids to Brown's Hole, in the heart of the mountain man's domain. That was astonishing, but there was greater astonishment in Black Harris's engagement to pilot Nathaniel Ford's company of five hundred to the mouth of the Columbia.

These signs said that the mountain man's empire had fallen. The tenderfoot would move down the trails the trapper had broken, few beaver pews would be taken from creeks that would now water crops, and plows would bring up the bones of the disregarded who had taken an Indian or two with them when they died, to make sure that those plows might break the soil. So Jim Clyman signed up with Manifest Destiny.

We need not follow that westering. Clyman got to Oregon. He spent some months inspecting the country and the settlements which, having organized themselves as a fragment of the United States floating in space, were clamoring to be moored to the United States. But there were new lands to visit. . . . "I never saw a more discontented community. . . . Nearly all, like myself, having been of a roving discontented character before leaving their eastern homes. The long tiresome trip from the States has taught them what they are capable of performing and enduring. They talk of removing to the Islands, California, Chili, and other parts of South

America with as much composure as you in Wisconsin talk of removing to Indiana or Michigan."

So in July of '45 Clyman went south to California. He reached Sutter's Fort at New Helvetia, made note of the fleas, and went on to Monterey to talk to Larkin. He turned north to Yerba Buena, spent about three months there, and in December plunged into the mountains on a bear hunt. We have seen him camped on Putah Creek, watching the spring come on.

In a little while he will write a letter to Captain Frémont, join Hastings, and start eastward along the trail down which the emigration is moving west.

9

Jim Clyman was a mountain man. That is the proudest of all the titles worn by the Americans who lived their lives out beyond the settlements. From all the colonies of the land, the Indian trader pushed up the streams, over the divides, and down into the new country. He was the man who knew the wilderness and he held the admiration of the settlements. Let there follow after him the men who built cabins; his was the edge and the extremity. The settlements saw his paddle flash at the bend, or sun glint on his rifle at the edge of the forest, and then there was no word of him till his shout sounded from the ridge and he was back, with furs.

He had to live in the wilderness. That is the point. Woods craft, forest craft, and river craft were his skill. To read the weather, the streams, the woods; to know the ways of animals and birds; to find food and shelter; to find the Indians when they were his customers or to battle them from stump to stump when they were on the war-path and to know which caprice was on them; to take comfort in flood or blizzard; to move safely through the wilderness, to make the wilderness his bed, his table, and his tool — this was his vocation. And habits and beliefs still deep in the patterns of our mind came to us from him. He was in flight from the sound of an axe and he lived under a doom which he himself created, but westward he went free.

Thus the Long Hunter. On May 25, 1804, Lewis and Clark, ascending the Missouri River toward the mountains, passed the mouth of La Charette Creek and a settlement "of seven small houses and as many poor families . . . the last establishment of whites." Here, in 1804, ended the fringe of civilization and the lifelong westering of "Colonel" Daniel Boone, seventy years old, his back to the wall, unable to go farther. The Long Hunter's farthest west. . . . Lewis and Clark went on up the river, to winter near

the Mandan villages at the Great Bend. So far the pirogues of rivermen were familiar and the trails were known. The next spring they went on, and to about the mouth of the Yellowstone they still traveled where the *voyageurs* had gone before them, but somewhere hereabout the known ended. Doubtless an occasional pirogue had passed beyond the Yellowstone and there is always some phantom Spaniard, a memory in an Indian narrative, who had come up from Taos to leave his scalp, his bridle, and perhaps his bastard in this country. Nevertheless, somewhere on this side of the Shining or Stony Mountains they were seeking, Lewis and Clark brought a white man's eyes for the first time to the big unknown. They went on into the mountains, over the divide, down the Snake to the Columbia, and on to the Pacific. The next year they were coming back along their own trail — and met fur hunters already following it toward the mountains. The Astorians moved in, the North West Company worked westward through the English lands, and Americans and Mexicans came up from a third base at Taos or Santa Fe. The era of the mountain man began.

The Long Hunter had slipped through soft forest shadows or paddled his dugout up easy streams, but the mountain man must take to horse in a treeless country whose rivers were far apart and altogether unnavigable. Before this there had been no thirst; now the creek that dwindled in the alkali or the little spring bubbling for a yard or two where the sagebrush turned a brighter green was what your life hung on. Before this, one had had only to look for game; now one might go for days without sight of food, learn to live on rattlesnake or prairie dog or, when those failed, on the bulbs of desert plants, or, when they failed, on the stewed gelatine of parfleche soles. Moreover, in that earlier wilderness, a week's travel, or two weeks' travel, would always bring you to where this year's huts were going up, but in the new country a white man's face was three months' travel, or six months or a year away. Finally this was the country of the Plains Indians, horse Indians, nomads, buffalo hunters, the most skillful, the most relentless, and the most savage on the continent. . . . Mountain craft was a technological adaptation to these hazards.

10

The Ashley party to which Jim Clyman was attached spent the winter of 1823-1824 in a valley north of Frémont's Peak in the Wind River Mountains. In February they tried to cross the range but could not, and moved southward look-

ing for a gap. (This was the trip that, as an incident merely, was to reveal South Pass.) One morning Jim and the Bill Sublette whom he was to meet again at Independence in '44 saddled their winter-worn horses and went out to hunt. Nothing showed in that arctic air till at sundown they sighted some buffalo. Their horses were too broken-down to make a run and they had to crawl on their bellies for nearly a mile over frozen snow. The buffalo scented them and bolted, but they wounded one. Sublette went back for the horses and Clyman followed the wounded buffalo, finally killing it in a small arroyo, whence he could not get it out alone. Sublette came up at nightfall; they got a small fire going, and were able to butcher some meat. But a blizzard came out of the north. There was no wood and but little sage; their fire was blown away. They pulled their robes over them, and the gale battered them till morning. At daylight Clyman was able to pull some sage but they could not ignite it, either by flint and steel or by rifle fire. Jim got the horses. Sublette was too weak to mount. Jim found a single live coal left from their fire of the night before and got the sage lighted. They warmed themselves and Sublette was able to mount his horse — but soon turned numb and began to die. Jim dismounted and led his friend's horse through snow a foot deep into the teeth of the gale. Four miles away he found a patch of timber where one wall of an Indian bark lodge was standing. Behind this shelter he got a fire going at last, then "ran back and whoped up my friends horse assisted him to dismount and get to the fire he seemed to [have] no life to move as usual he laid down nearly assleep while I went Broiling meat on a stick after awhile I roused him up and gave him his Breakfast when he came to and was as active as usual."

Jim says, "I have been thus particular in describing one night near the summit of the Rocky mountains although a number similar may and often do occur."

The following June, coming east, Clyman pushed ahead of his companions, among them Fitzpatrick, and moved down the Sweetwater to wait for them on the Platte. Near Devil's Gate he suddenly found Indians on all sides. He holed up like a prairie dog in the rocks for eleven days, the Indians having set up their village. Then he "began to get lonesome." He had "plenty of powder but only eleven bullets." Since this was a wholly new country he did not know "whether I was on Platt[e] or the Arkansas," but he decided to get out. Note his course: "On the 12th day in the afternoon I left my look-

out at the mouth of Sweetwater and proceeded downstream knowing that civilization could be reached Eastward." Eastward about six hundred miles in an air line.

He started out. He killed a buffalo. He kept close to the streams. He found an abandoned bullboat and so knew that either whites or Indians had passed this way. Once he saw some martins and lay listening to them — "it reminded me of home & civilisation." Encountering some wild horses, he tried to crease one but broke its neck. Some Indians overtook him, robbed him of his blanket, powder, and lead, and bore him to the village, intending to kill him. But a friendly chief led him out of camp, restored his rifle, and gave him some parched corn. Game failed, water failed, and Clyman grew weak. He saw two badgers fighting. His gun misfired but he picked up some bones, "horse brobly," and killed the badgers. It rained for some days and the wet grass made walking easier but brought out the prairies' deadliest wild life, the mosquitoes. The going was harder, food scarcer, time stretching out.

I could not sleep and it got so damp I could not obtain fire and I had to swim several rivers at last I struck a trail that seemed to lead in the right direction which I determined to follow to its extream end on the second day [on this trail] in the afternoon I got so sleepy and nervous that it was with difficulty I kept the trail a number of times I tumbled down asleep but a quick nervous jerk would bring me to my feet again in one of these fits I started up on the trail travelled some 40 rods when I hapened to notise I was going back the way I had come turning right around I went on for some time with my head down when raising my eyes with great surprise I saw the stars and stripes waving over Fort Leavenworth [really Fort Atkinson, 150 miles up the Missouri from Fort Leavenworth] I swoned emmeddiately how long I lay unconscious I do not know . . .

So there entered into Captain Bennett Riley's quarters a bearded, hatless, all but starved mountain man, his buckskins and moccasins in tatters, his powder used up, after eighty days and at least seven hundred miles of solitary journeying. Ten days later Fitzpatrick and two others reached the fort after even harder going. . . . This was misadventure after accident, a commonplace risk in the mountain trade.

Much of the routine could be repeated here from Clyman's recollections: drifting downstream with a log to escape the Aricara, watching a Dakota tear the flesh of a dead enemy with his teeth, sewing Jedediah Smith's scalp and ear in place after a grizzly had lacerated them, starving in winter canyons, purged by alkali water, feast-

ting with the Crows on a buffalo hunt, battling the Arapaho on Green River, captured by the Blackfeet but escaping them. But the routine may be assumed.

11

Of the Ashley expedition which he joined Clyman said that "Falstaf's Battallion was genteel in comparison." Yet it included some men whose distinction did not rest entirely on their craftsmanship. There was Jedediah Smith, the Yankee whose ambition was to be a geographer, who first crossed the desert to California and first made contact northwestward with the Hudson's Bay Company, whose reports it would have been sensible of both Polk and Frémont to look up — a Christian gentleman who became an explorer of the first rank. There were Pierre Louis Vasquez, the Spanish gentleman of St. Louis; Robert Campbell, who was to become a great Western merchant; Andrew Henry who, like Campbell, was a true empire builder. Elsewhere in the mountain trade there were men like them: Joe Meek, whose cousin by marriage, Jim Polk, was President of the United States in '46; Lucien Fontenelle, in whose veins flowed the royal blood of France; Peter Skene Ogden, from a family that had been loyalist in the Revolution and was now important in Canada; Manuel Lisa, whose life was ambiguous and shadowed but who came from the Spanish aristocracy; "Captain William George Drummond Stewart, seventh Baronet of Grandtully," trapper, traveler, big-game hunter, and novelist to be. There were other sprigs of British, French, and Spanish nobility, remittance men or younger sons or just the restless seeking a new title. There were British army officers who had tasted the life on frontier garrison duty and liked it, men like George F. Ruxton, Lieutenant of Her Majesty's 89th Regiment, whom we shall meet in Mexico. There was the Irish romantic, American journalist, and European revolutionary, Mayne Reid.

Against such mountain men may be set off such others as Edward Rose, the crossbred white, Negro, and Cherokee, who had been a river pirate and became a Crow chief. Or another riverman, Mike Fink, who is immortal in our folklore. Or another Crow chief, the mulatto Jim Beckwith who went up the river as Ashley's blacksmith and gave our literature its goriest lies. Or Bonneville's partisan, Joe Walker, who broke part of Frémont's trail, who wiped out Diggers as he would have stepped on ants, and who, following the lead of Ewing Young, opened a trade in stolen California horses and so gave the mountains another routine of simple theft, com-

plicated though not made hazardous by the murder of Californians.

And there were those whose distinction was wholly of the trade itself. There was the French strain. There were the Canadians and Scots of the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay outfit that absorbed it. More particularly there were the Americans, mostly Missourians, Kentuckians, and Virginians, to the number of a good many hundred. And finally the great triumvirate must be named: Kit Carson, the Little Chief; Tom Fitzpatrick, White Head or Broken Hand; and, with drums and trumpets, Old Gabe, Jim Bridger.

A few of the names still clang a little, and Kit Carson and Jim Bridger have found a permanent place in our legends. But the catalogue does not disclose the history coiled within it or the era they began and ended within the span of a single lifetime.

They were the agents of as ruthless a commerce as any in human history; they were its exploited agents. The companies hired them — or traded with the highest order of them, the free trappers, such as have been named above — on terms of the companies' making, paid them off in the companies' goods, valued at the companies' prices deep in the mountains. They worked in a peonage like the Greasers they despised, the freed Negroes of the South, or the sharecroppers of our day. The companies outfitted them and sent them out to lose their traps, their horses, and frequently their scalps — to come back broke and go deeper into debt for next year's outfit. Their trade capitalized starvation, was known to practice land piracy, and at need incited Indians against competitors. It made war on Indians who traded with competitors, and debauched the rest with the raw alcohol that was called whiskey in the mountains. There was no problem in the Indian trade which firewater could not solve; so the fixed policy of the business that made rich men of the Astors, Chouteaus, McKenzies, Ashleys, and Campbells perfected the methods begun by coasters along the Atlantic littoral. The Indians went down before tin tubs curved to fit a pack saddle and filled with alcohol at fifty cents a gallon. . . . And as they went down, took with them through the hole in the earth the scalps of mountain men.

"Adventure, romance, avarice, misanthropy, and sometimes social outlawry have their influence on enticing or driving these persons into the savage wilderness," Edwin Bryant wrote, who learned to respect them but observed that they lived in savagery. To Francis Parkman they were "the half-savage men who spend their

reckless lives in trapping among the Rocky Mountains," and he could live with them as he never brought himself to live with the "offscourings of the frontier," those sallow-faced and inquisitive people who were moving on toward Oregon. He even came to call one of them a friend, Henry Chatillon, who chaperoned him through the prairies, whom he found noble and true-hearted, "a proof of what unaided nature will sometimes do." Chatillon interpreted them and so he could associate with others, till at last he could lie in camp with them at the mouth of Chugwater and listen with unalloyed admiration to their stories, and "defy the annals of chivalry to furnish the record of a life more wild and perilous than that of a Rocky Mountain trapper."

The savagery thus alleged was that of the Indians, a neolithic people. Jim Beckwith, who knew, said that though the Indian could never become a white man, the white man lapsed easily into an Indian. The mountain man's eye had the Indian's alertness, forever watching for the movement of boughs or grasses, for the passage of wild life downwind, something unexplained floating in a stream, dust stirring in a calm, or the configuration of mere scratches on a cottonwood. His ear would never again hear church bells or the noises of a farm but, like the Indian's, was tuned to catch any sound in a country where every sound was provisionally a death warning. He dressed like an Indian, in blankets, robes, buckskins, and moccasins, and it was sometimes his humor to grease his hair and stripe his face with vermilion. He lived like an Indian in bark huts or skin lodges, and married a succession of squaws. He thought like an Indian, propitiating the demons of the wild, making medicine, and consulting the omens. He had on call a brutality as instant as the Indian's and rather more relentless. The Indians who had proved themselves his friends were his friends just so long as they seemed to be; all others were to be shot and scalped at sight. It was the Indian law, no violence to be left unavenged.

He might winter at Taos, that first of wild Western towns; he might bring his or the company's furs to St. Louis after the fall hunt, when the town would roar with mountain war cries, rock with the pleasures of behemoths, and grow quiet toward dawn when he spread his robes in some alley under the sky. But mostly he wintered at a log stockade a thousand miles from the Planters' House — Bent's Fort, Fort Union, Fort Pierre, Fort Laramie — or huddled up in some basin under the peaks, Brown's Hole, Ogden's Hole, Jackson's Hole, Pierre's Hole,

Bayou Salade. Mostly his only touch with the settlements was an annual debauch when the caravan came to buy his furs and get the purchase price back in tobacco and alcohol at 2000 per cent advance. For the rest, in small parties he was on the creeks and among the mountains. His legs stiffened from the icy waters where he trapped beaver. Behind any ridge Blackfeet or Arapaho might be waiting for him. From the dark behind any fire he lighted might come the ultimate arrow. Any sleep might end in the rush of stampeded horses and a gurgle in his partner's throat. He had ahead of him only more years of unintermitted struggle against a savage country, unending warfare against a savage race, the long stretch against starvation, solitude, loneliness, and some final effort that would be not quite enough. Comparatively few lived to settle down as colonels in the tamed West; the trade did not last long enough for many to grow old in it.

True enough. . . . But the back trail was always there and need only be followed eastward. Few ever took it. They were, by God! the mountain men. The companies might exploit them but they were free and masters. Folks might call them Indians but they were better Indians. They had usurped the Indian's technology and had so bettered it that they could occupy the Indian's country and subdue the Indian. They had mastered the last, the biggest, and the hardest wilderness. Give any of them a horse and a pack mule, a half dozen traps, a couple of robes, a bag of possibles, and a rifle — and he could live comfortably among privations that broke the emigrants' spirit and safe among dangers that killed soldiers like flies in the first frost. They had learned not only to survive the big lonesome but to live there at the height of function.

And to be a free man. At any evening fire below the Tetons, if they had paid civilization its last fee of contempt they had recompense in full, and Henry Thoreau had described it. They made their society, and its constraints were just the conditions of nature and their wills, the self-reliance in self-knowledge that Mr. Emerson commended. At that campfire under the Tetons, in the illimitable silence of the mountain night with the great clouds going by overhead, one particular American desire and tradition existed in its final purity. A company of free companions had mastered circumstance in freedom, and

their yarns were an odyssey of the man in buckskins who would not be commanded — what scalps had been taken along the Yellowstone, who counted coup in Middle Park, what marvels had been seen in John Colter's Hell or where the stone trees lie beyond the painted desert or where the waters of Beer Spring make the prettiest young squaw quite unattractive for a surprising time. The stories came from a third of a continent and summed up something more than two centuries of the American individual.

Finally there was the beauty of this last wilderness, added upon all the unspoiled natural beauties through which the individual had passed in his two centuries. The land of little rain, the Shining Mountains. It was theirs before the movers came to blemish it — rivers flowing white water, peaks against the sky, distances of blue mist against the rose-pink buttes, the canyons, the forests, the greasewood flats where the springs sank out of sight. They were the first to pass this way and, heedless of the eagle's wing they stretched across the setting sun, they stayed here. God had set the desert in their hearts.

Their era was ending when Jim Clyman got to Independence in '44 and found Bill Sublette. Now the streams were trapped out, and even if beaver should come back, the price of plews would never rise again. There were two or three thousand Americans in Oregon, a couple of hundred in California, and in Independence hundreds of wagons were yoking up. Bill Sublette and Black Harris were guiding movers. Carson and Fitzpatrick were completing the education of John Charles Frémont.

Forty years since Lewis and Clark. Think back to that blank paper with some names sketched in — the Wind River peaks, the Tetons, the Picketwire River, the Siskidee; names which, mostly, the mountain men sketched in — something under a million square miles, the fundamental watershed, a thousand mountain men scalped in this wilderness, the deserts crossed, the trails blazed and packed down, the mountains made known, the caravans carrying freight to Santa Fe, Bill Bowen selling his place to go to Oregon, half a dozen wagonwrights setting up at Independence . . . and, far off, like a fly buzzing against a screen, Joe Meek's cousin, Mr. Polk, preparing war.

Whose country was it?

(To be continued)

TWO IN A CANOE

by PAUL BROOKS

1

PADDLE your own canoe" is a misleading expression. One in a canoe is not enough. A canoe is a boat for two. Right side up, and especially upside down, two are better than one.

A canoe is infinitely adaptable. You can paddle it, pole it, or sail it. You can sleep in it or under it. You can transport it in a baggage car, on a trailer, on top of your automobile or your back. It will float on a heavy dew, yet it is not too frail for the open ocean. In rapids it will give you the thrill of a ski run; on a lake at evening it is the embodiment of peace. A canoe, like rum, is a ready mixer. It goes well with fishing or birding or camping or loafing; in fact, with everything but courting. If you want a Permanent Bow Paddle, court her elsewhere.

The Bow Paddle and I learned the joys of canoe trips from a secondhand sixteen-footer, picked up at bargain rates from a canoe livery. We rigged a lateen sail of spinnaker cloth (nine by nine by eight feet along the leech), with spars of one-inch doweling, and a mast from a closet coat rail, stepped forward of the bow seat in a large curtain-rod socket. The rest of our equipment is equally simple and does not pretend to be standard. Choice in camping stuff is almost as personal as choice in books. Here is the inventory from stem to stern: a tin breadbox — antproof — for the food, with butter, sugar, salt, etc., in ice-cream cartons; a small stove (simply an aluminum box with a grate, which also serves to carry odds and ends); a light axe; a flashlight; binoculars; United States Geodetic Survey maps (1 inch to the mile); extra clothes in a packbasket; blankets in a canvas roll; air mattresses; mosquito netting; a triangle of cotton cloth for a tent; and a waterproof canvas to go over all. At night, with

the bow of the inverted canoe propped up on paddles lashed to the forward thwart, and the cloth pegged down at one side, you have a fair shelter calling for neither poles nor trees. The air mattresses are frankly sybaritical. Some may prefer to "rough it"; we would rather sleep warm and keep our flanks dry. Balsam beds smell good but they are slow to make and hard on the trees. (We bought the mattresses, I remember, after a night in mid-April on a half-drowned island in the Connecticut River opposite Northampton. It was raining; there was water around us, above us, and under us. In the night I was awakened by Black Ducks swimming about and feeding — whether inside or outside the tent I never knew.) Whatever your taste in equipment, keep it simple and light and tie it on.

In a canoe too many plans are as bad as too many gadgets: the best trip the Bow Paddle and I ever took began as an afternoon sail at the head of Lake Champlain; but we were prepared for anything, and it developed into a five-day run down the length of the lake and well into Canada. At the very most, plan the grand strategy and leave the tactics to the water and the weather. Over canoeists there watches a special Providence that takes the place of logical thought. Witness what happened to us one June morning on the upper Connecticut River. Here, near the Canadian border, the mighty Connecticut is only a fair-sized trout stream; but there had been a week of rain and the brown water was swirling high along the banks. Fishing was over for the time being. Even the optimistic couple from Boston, with whom we had fished the previous day, must be discouraged by now. But conditions poor for taking trout were good for a quick-water canoe run. We set out optimistically, our vague destination a town some twenty-five miles downstream. For ten or twelve miles all went well. Then a long stretch of heavy rapids or

PAUL BROOKS, a graduate of Harvard and Managing Editor of Houghton Mifflin, is a close friend of Donald Culross Peattie and an explorer who, with his "Bow Paddle," has spent happy days on our lovely New England rivers.

"haystacks" appeared ahead. Since there was no direction to go but ahead, we went ahead. We did not upset. We submerged slowly, gracefully, like a submarine when no pursuer is in sight. Then we bounced on bottom, grace departed, and we slithered ashore. And here is the point: on the bank, as if awaiting our arrival and submersion, stood the couple from Boston, with sweaters to warm us outside, whiskey to warm us inside, and a car to take us back to camp. From twenty-five miles of river, they had chosen this one spot to cast a fly. At least they didn't come home empty-handed.

Even in wartime, canoeist's luck holds. Last summer, midway on a trip down Lake Memphremagog and the St. Francis River, we were stopped by a huge dam in the city of Magog. Here was the largest textile mill in Canada. As we approached, a stout uniformed guard, studded with artillery, rushed out of his doghouse and yelled at us. There was a war on. We could go no further. Might we carry around the dam? No. Might we go through the mill yard? No. What might we do? Go back the way you came. The trip was over. At that moment miraculously appeared a half-dressed figure, apparently aroused from his Sunday nap in the neat white house on shore. It was the manager of the local trout hatchery, himself an ardent canoeist. Our boat went on top of his car. In twenty minutes it had gone around the mill, through the city, and was floating again on the quiet St. Francis.

2

Equal to almost anything, canoes are river rats at heart. Quick-water canoeing in the rapids is a sport of the early spring, when every brook brings melted snow down from the mountains and rivers run high. Involving both paddle and pole, it is a fine and strenuous art. From brief experience in and under white water, I can only suggest that an old keelless canoe, ripe for smashing, is the beginner's best equipment. The absence of a keel makes the bottom more vulnerable but the boat itself easier to worm between the rocks. On a quick-water run, your dignity should also be ripe for smashing. You may find yourself lifted out of the boat like a monkey on your pole or sitting alone in mid-stream clinging to a boulder by your coccyx.

Swift or smooth, broad as the Hudson or narrow enough to scrape your gunwales, every river is a world of its own, with its individual tempo and life. Each mile on a river will take you further from home than a hundred miles on a road. You will see more in an hour than a motor-

ist will see in a week. Birds, for example. River valleys are the songbirds' paradise. In New England, the Hudson and Connecticut valleys are flyways of migration, and small streams generally provide food and cover along their banks, as well as the water that all birds must have. It is amusing to paddle down some quiet river, screened from the surrounding country by dense alder thickets, and try to determine by means of bird songs the nature of the land through which you are passing. Meadowlarks and Bobolinks indicate fields and pastures; Robins and Bluebirds and Orioles also mean open country — orchards perhaps, or scattered trees; but if you hear the soft voice of Thrushes, or the "Teacher! TEACHER! TEACHER!" of the Ovenbird, you are probably in the deep woods.

The Spotted Sandpiper and the Kingfisher are characteristic birds of the New England rivers, but the bird I associate most of all with canoeing is the American Merganser or Sheldrake. On one trip down the Connecticut, we drove before us no less than four families of Sheldrakes — the gray, rufous-headed mother ducks flopping noisily ahead to attract our attention, while the ducklings alternately hid in the bushes along the shore and sped like little aquaplanes after their parent. It seemed as if they would wear themselves out. Several times we hid the boat and tried to drive them back upstream, but in vain.

Birds add flavor to any outdoor activity. Even the disappointment of losing a large trout is tempered by finding the nest of a Water-Thrush at the edge of the pool. Yet to the layman the haunts and habits of birds are no more entertaining than the haunts and habits of bird-lovers. They will choose incredible places in which to pursue their hobby. Sometimes the choice is involuntary. Caught once by a thunder squall on a big lake, the B. P. and I had raced for a cottage on the nearest point. Alas, it was locked. Out back, however, stood a bright virgin one-holer. A squeeze, but rainproof — what is more, a perfect blind for bird study. Through the new moon in the door we could watch Sandpipers and Killdeer Plovers running over the beach, Ducks feeding off shore, and in the marsh grass a statuesque Great Blue Heron and an American Bittern or Bog-pumper. (The Bittern, by the way, has shown that the habits of bird-lovers can be as odd as their haunts. On one occasion an important bird book was almost abandoned at the moment of publication because the editors could not agree as to whether the Bittern while "pumping" said: *ugh PLUM pud'n* or *ugh plum PUD'N*.)

3

A canoe with a sail is like a horse with wings. It doesn't come natural. But there is a place for Pegasus if you give him room to cavort in. To sail a canoe with any freedom, you need a broad river or, better still, a lake or salt-water harbor. Here, with leeboards and a light load, you can even beat to windward. (Leeboards are shaped like wide, stubby paddles, fastened to a transverse bar at right angles to the gunwale, held tight with butterfly nuts so that they can be raised or lowered en route. On a long trip leave them home; they weigh more than they are worth. Unless the wind is fair, you will find it quicker to paddle.) For salt marshes and tidal estuaries, a canoe has the edge on an outboard motorboat; you may see a Duck before it takes flight, hear the Yellowlegs answer your whistle, smell the rich mud of the marsh. A canoe trip at sea is something of a tour de force, though one can take long voyages in good summer weather. Here your horse wants wings. On a broad expanse of water, you may paddle till your back aches but you only inch along. There is little change of scene, whereas a river has something new for you around every bend. Yet even salt-water paddling may also have its moments of perverse satisfaction, such as the time we smugly threaded our way into Marblehead Harbor through the cream of America's racing yachts, helplessly becalmed outside.

But to me a canoe under sail will always mean Lake Champlain. A single trip down the hundred-mile lake and a stretch of the Richelieu River gave a taste of everything: sailing, paddling, excitement, and peace. Heading north, we had sailed through the narrows at Ticonderoga and Crown Point. Behind us lay a stretch of lake that had seemed more like a sluggish river, with pickerel weed lining the banks and Red-Wing Blackbirds rising from the cattails. Only the bantam lighthouses had given promise of wider waters to come. Now the promise was being fulfilled. Champlain was no longer a river. Far to the west lay the gray folds of the Adirondacks; to the east, half hidden from our sight by the sail, rose the knobbier mountains of Vermont. The Bow Paddle lay back to the mast, the sheet wrapped round her foot. I leaned on the steering paddle as it curved with the weight of water. Probably we were not making more than five or six miles an hour. But speed is relative, and with the rail a few inches above the whitecapped surface we were flying. Two days of this and we had reached Valcour Island — the scene of Benedict Arnold's famous naval battle with

Burgoyne. We looked in vain for a camping spot on its steep slopes. A tiny ledge at length appeared. Here was room for a bed and a fire. We heaved out our junk (it cannot be described as "duffel"), built a fire of driftwood in the stove, blew up the air mattresses (seven puffs will do it), and created our personal brand of hobo jungle. As we finished our supper and Champlain Specials ($\frac{1}{2}$ Rye, $\frac{1}{2}$ Lake Champlain) the wind dropped. A waxing moon dimmed the last embers of the fire. The gulls ceased to cry. Back and forth between two headlands, forming the cusps of a crescent beach, flew dozens of bats. The pebbles of the beach itself gave forth a low rumble, quite unlike the hiss of waves on sand, but equally good for sleep.

It was on this same trip that our canoe became a ship. In five days of sailing, we had reached the foot of Lake Champlain and were crossing the line into Canada. A canoe, I expected, would be beneath official notice. On the contrary, a customs officer examined us as carefully as he would a seagoing vessel, plumbed our hold and recorded the colors of our blankets. Satisfied at last, he gave me a certificate declaring that "The Master of the *S. S. Paul Brooks*" had complied with all regulations. Sixteen feet of sturdy ship, swollen with new dignity, headed down the Richelieu River.

The canoeist's Providence that hauled us out of the Connecticut River and around the dam at Magog made a fine last gesture as we left Champlain for home. In shirts and shorts we were sitting among the well-dressed passengers on the New York train, Whitehall bound, with the boat in the baggage car. From the window we watched our trip unfold, like a motion-picture film speeding in reverse. (I figured two days' canoeing, on the average, for each hour of a fast train.) Our automobile was still parked by the lake — and the railroad — some miles above Whitehall. How to return to it from there was a problem yet unsolved. We saw it flash by the window. But express trains do not stop for canoeists. And then, incredibly, the train slowed down and stopped. The northbound was going by. To the consternation of the other passengers, we leaped from our seats, slipped out the door, and returned along the tracks. . . .

America has turned her back upon her rivers. Once her lifeblood, they are now too often her drains; the path to the front door has become the backyard dump. Fishermen have already done much to change this; today, as pleasure driving vanishes, pleasure boating may do the rest. Canoe miles are not rationed. Turn around, America!

A MESSENGER OF FREEDOM

Esther Forbes's Canny Portrait of the Real Paul Revere

PAUL REVERE AND THE WORLD HE LIVED IN. By *Esther Forbes*. Houghton Mifflin Company. \$3.75

"It was young flood, the ship was winding and the moon rising. . . ." In these words, Paul Revere's own, the adventure starts — the crossing of the Charles on the night of that famous ride from Boston out to Lexington. They are good words for the start of an adventure, whether for a Boston silversmith or for a nation. They are good words to find in a book today. Paul Revere has not left us many words. He was an artisan, not a philosopher; a creator, not a talker. But the words he has left are enough, in sympathetic hands, to bring him to life as he was, and he is solid, human, and refreshing.

Esther Forbes has done well by Paul Revere — the actual Revere, a Boston workman of French descent, cool, canny, successful, the husband of two wives and the father of sixteen children, loving his home and the skill he wrought with his hands, a maker of silver, bells, ships' bottoms, and artificial teeth. The legendary Revere, he of the upraised arm and the rearing horse at the farmhouse door, succumbs with surprising ease. Miss Forbes does no debunking. She simply tells the truth, and the truth is more real in her telling of it than any legend could be. Perhaps it is not suited so well to oratory and high-school declamations, but Paul Revere shrewdly picking out his route on the Sunday before his ride, Paul Revere forgetting his spurs, Billy Dawes falling off his horse at Lexington, and the forty-ish, family Paul Revere carrying his half of John Hancock's trunk around the corner of a house as the first shot snaps across the Lexington Green give the picture a nearness to us — and an understanding which the legend with its heroics never had.

The real Revere is more of a problem for Miss Forbes. "He seems," she says, "to have been a man of no spite, envy, or vindictiveness." And when she adds that there is something about this quality which is hard to dramatize, those of us who write can detect the wistfulness in her tone. If the real Revere does not at first glitter for us, or strike imaginative sparks, if some parts of his biography even verge toward the

dull, that is his fault, not Miss Forbes's — and ours, who come at him with the legendary vision.

Paul Revere's World

There is wisdom in Miss Forbes's title. The world he lived in rounds out Paul Revere. The French and Indian Wars, the crash of the Land Bank, the ringing of church bells over Boston, and the splendor of King Hancock fill the gaps in Revere's own life and give a satisfying sense of dimension. They give sharp details, too, sharply etched and revealing and provocative of thought. If Captain Goldfinch of the Fourteenth, for instance, had not owed the French barber Piemont so that the barber set a greasy apprentice to bawl insults at the dapper captain, would the Boston Massacre have flared up into that fatal volley? If Sam Adams, backstair politician and ruler of trained mobs, had not got the ear of John Hancock, and his money — If Thomas Hutchinson had had less financial foresight and had not unwittingly ruined the family of James Otis — These are the details, the rational, explanatory, interlocking cogs our history needs, and they are given skillfully and their moral is not labored. Only when the author shifts from the past to point obvious parallels and contrasts with the present does the narrative falter — and loses its flavor considerably by doing so. But the details are there for us to see, and it is time we saw them. It is time, too, that we saw Sam Adams muttering, after the war, "People are not worth saving when they have lost their virtue." Sam Adams is well drawn. So is John. And Joseph Warren. Thomas Hutchinson stands out clear and acute. He is the most tragic figure in the book, the old order passing, intelligent, courageous, and so desperately near to being right.

Paul Revere and the World He Lived In is a book we should have had long ago. The book rings genuine, even without the help of its notes and a long bibliography. Best of all, it rings auspiciously, for in it is the life of a man who more than any other bridged the gap between the old world and the new — a steady man, a man who worked with his hands, a man who could trudge on.

"It was young flood, the ship was winding and the moon rising. . . ." It carries a heartening sound. Paul Revere is still a messenger. **BURKE BOYCE**

Bookshelf

THE STORY OF SACAJAWEA

An Indian Love Lyric

FORWARD THE NATION. By *Donald Culross Peattie*. G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$2.50

1 1 1

The exploration of our Far West struck its most heroic note at the very beginning. The expedition of Lewis and Clark through the newly purchased Louisiana was one of the most successful in the history of exploration and incomparably the most important in the exploration of the United States. It is one of the greatest American stories and — apart from the journals of the two captains — it has never been properly told. If a writer of the first rank should undertake to write this story, American literature would be enriched by a great book. A quite ordinary writer could produce a memorable book by telling the story simply and faithfully.

Mr. Peattie has not told the story simply, faithfully, or with informed historical understanding. He has told only a part of it, rather less than a third. He has told that part lyrically and imaginatively but with a displacement of emphases that ends by misrepresenting it. He has written a romantic, even sentimental novel which takes no more liberty with facts than historical fiction usually takes, but falsifies and — what is worse — prettifies a story which a wiser historian would have permitted to stand foursquare on its own dignity. His prose is ardent, his narrative has brilliance and nervous life, and anyone who reads it will appreciate its patriotic fervor. But it is an arty book and it is not Lewis and Clark, it is not the story of our greatest exploration; it is not, even, Mr. Peattie's heroine, Sacajawea.

Mr. Peattie moves a little uncertainly in the details of history. He gets Tennessee into the Union before Kentucky. Although he is a naturalist, he has buffalo galloping at four thousand pounds on the hoof, fully twice the weight of a full-grown bull. He has the Union Pacific laying track through South Pass and appears to believe that this pass, the nerve center of Western history, lies between the Uinta and the Wasatch Mountains. No railroad has ever gone through South Pass, and neither the Uintas nor the Wasatch are anywhere near it. He has some warrant for his account of Sacajawea's later life, since Grace Hebard has spent years erecting an elaborate theory

on the slenderest evidence, but here was a good place for skepticism, since Dr. Hebard has not convinced many historians.

Heroes — or a heroine

It is not the details of history in Mr. Peattie's book to which one demurs, however, but the implicit thesis, the central effect. Sacajawea, his heroine, is certainly an American heroine, and she was certainly a woman of extraordinary courage, loyalty, ingenuity, and dignity of spirit. It is quite true that her knowledge of the Shoshoni country and her relationship to a Shoshoni chief saved the expedition at one of its many crises. She was far more valuable to it, and far more of a man and a gentleman, than her worthless husband. Both the captains respected and liked her, though it is Clark who speaks of her with personal tenderness and not, as Mr. Peattie says, Lewis. But her spirit was that of an Indian; if she is a great person she is great as an Indian squaw achieving an understanding of white men's values, and even in fiction she would have been more memorable as a neolithic mind bridging the gulf between the races than as a creature of poetry.

Furthermore, Sacajawea was a subordinate character on the expedition and in writing her up Mr. Peattie has necessarily written the two great captains down. It was just what the common label calls it, the expedition of Lewis and Clark, whereas Mr. Peattie makes it Sacajawea's discovery of the Northwest Passage. He gets into the book little of the soul-stirring adventurousness of the expedition and even less of the achievement that has made it important ever since. The stretch of greatest heroism was the one between the Shoshoni country and the mouth of the Columbia, to which he merely alludes, and some of the most important explorations (as well as some of the events that proved crucial) belong to the return trip, of which he says nothing at all. It is to be hoped that his fervor and fine prose will not deter anyone who may have been contemplating a book about Lewis and Clark. They are still there for anyone who may want to use them, great leaders of men, great diplomats, great explorers, and the proprietors of a story so great that it does not need the services of fiction.

BERNARD DeVOTO

FIRST PERSON SINGULAR

by EDWARD WEEKS

THERE is something in a landlubber that loves a slow boat and placid water. Canal boats, scows, a wreck that has been shelved on some sandbar — these appeal to A. P. Herbert, Robert Nathan, and me; and if I am any judge, we are all three landlubbers who prefer the sea smooth — and at a distance. Robert Nathan spends his summers on Cape Cod, and his new and very short novel *The Sea-Gull Cry* (Knopf, \$2.00) is laid on the sandbars off Truro and Provincetown. Mr. Nathan is valuable as a poet, not as a mariner, and there are lovely descriptive passages in this story — the Cape under sun and fog, the blueberry patch, the sail home from Provincetown under full moon. But here is little of the enchantment which we remember in *Portrait of Jennie*, and none of that stern compassion which ennobled his *Road of Ages*. This is a grim year in which to expect any creative writer to measure up to his best work. It is enough, then, to say that this is a plaintive tale which ruffles the surface of our emotions with its momentary picture of an inhibited pedagogue and a lonely, lovely Polish exile.

E. B. White began to write for the *New Yorker*: he acquired the habit of the essayist, and I suspect it was this intense concentration on self which finally turned him away from Manhattan and toward that salt farm on the Maine Coast where today he vegetates to his heart's content. *One Man's Meat* (Harpers, \$2.50) is a collection of forty-five short papers written since July, 1938 — “a book in celebration of life in a period of violent death.”

I must say that I find Mr. White's mind a pleasant one to explore. It is as casual as it is friendly, full of odd contrasts and jackdaw fancies. It has a dry, Chablis sense of exaggeration (the dog with the stone, for instance); it has the delightful knack of pairing irreconcilables in sentences that make you snort — as in the Trailer Park where, says Mr. White, “Neighborliness pervaded the streets, and the faint memory of fried eggs.” Mr. White is very happy in his bucolic beatitude, but I find it hard to believe that his house and his life are always as equable as he says. There is monotony in *One Man's Meat* — and a limitation which I wish Mr. White would break through. Rage in print is one of the

finest things a man can write — doesn't Mr. White ever get mad? The emotion with which De Quincey spoke of the actor and Lamb of his *Dream Children* is still glowing, whereas Mr. White does not yet care to show us how deeply he feels.

Perhaps because he is exactly my age, it was my first thought that Stephen Vincent Benét is too young a writer to appear today in his *Selected Works* (Farrar & Rinehart, \$5.00). When Steve was at Yale, we at Cambridge used to refer to him as one of the “Browning or Bust” School. It was a brilliant group: Archibald MacLeish had made literature respectable as Chairman of the *Yale Lit*, and after him came Farrar, Benét, Thornton Wilder, Phil Barry, Charles Walker, Phelps Putnam, Walter Millis. Their work as it appeared in the *Yale Lit* and *S4N* made us envious. Whether Browning or Morris exerted the most influence on Benét the Younger I was not close enough to tell. But watching him write his way to recognition, first with his lyrics, then with his autobiographic school-and-college novel (“one of the required projects in those days”), then with his first short stories, and remembering the time he devoted to the research and writing of *John Brown's Body*, I am impressed by the persistence with which he concentrated on American themes and by the enlarging vision with which he wrote.

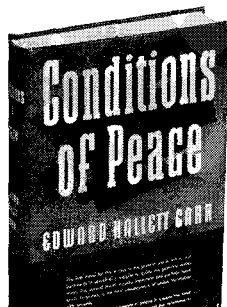
The poet has always been present in Benét, but over the years it is his superb narrative gift which has gained him his following. To specify his originality, I should put first his ability to develop the narrative poem in those long, loose five- or six-beat lines which Davenport speaks of, lines which supply the suppleness, the strength, and the variation which a long poem must have. Secondly, I think he has infused his short stories — *The Devil and Daniel Webster*, *A Tooth for Paul Revere*, *Johnny Pye* and *the Fool-Killer*, and even *All Around the Town* — with a kind of fourth-dimensional magic and that note of nobility which was not often heard in the Long Armistice. Finally, I salute him for his prescience of the coming war. In poems like his *Ode to the Austrian Socialists* and *Nightmare at Noon* he spoke out with the cold steel anger of a man aroused. It braces the spirit to read (or reread) Benét today.

DRIVIN' WOMAN

By Elizabeth Pickett Chevalier

MERRY MONCURE takes her place beside Scarlett O'Hara among memorable American heroines of fiction in this story packed with romance and thrilling adventure, and set against one of the most dramatic periods of our history—1865 to 1910.

Interwoven in 600 action-filled pages is the love story of a Virginia heiress with a scapegrace river gambler, pictures of the New York of Boss Tweed, Jay Gould and Jim Fisk, the Richmond of reconstruction, and boom towns of the middle West. \$2.75



CONDITIONS OF PEACE

By Edward Hallett Carr

Advance readers of this book are unanimous in agreement that it may prove as important to post-war planning as Keynes' *Economic Consequences of the Peace* might have been had it come before instead of after Versailles. An internationally-known historian says: "It would be hardly less than criminal not to publish and vigorously push it."

\$2.50

The Disarmament Illusion

BY MERZE TATE. Here is the definitive story of the disarmament movement down to 1907, published under the auspices of the Bureau of International Research of Harvard University and Radcliffe College. \$3.50

The Long Ships Passing

By Walter Havighurst

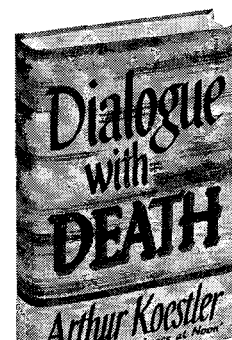
The Story of the Great Lakes

Three hundred years of history concerning the great inland seas—the largest bodies of fresh water in the world. Mr. Havighurst's story runs from the earliest fur trader to the great ore and grain carrying "whale backs." From seas of legend the lakes have become a great world trade route. (Illustrations by John O'Hara Cosgrave II) \$3.50

DIALOGUE WITH DEATH

By Arthur Koestler

The author of "Darkness at Noon" and "Scum of the Earth" provides in this volume a starkly honest account of just what facing death means. It is the story of his stay in prison under sentence of death during the Spanish Revolution. The tensest sort of drama and with the "tone" underneath which only Koestler seems to be able to sound. \$2.00



60 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

THE *Atlantic Bookshelf*

CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM

By Sholem Asch

\$2.50

PUTNAM

THE Jewish people offer unique material to the writer who knows them, because they are the only race that is both intensely provincial and completely cosmopolitan. *Children of Abraham* consists of twenty-nine illustrations of this dual character of a people living in ghettos of a dozen countries, never wholly escaping the powerful pull of their ancient traditions and the equally strong temptation to assimilate themselves to their surroundings. It is a situation that makes for an overpowering pathos at times, at others for an ironical humor, and at still others for a very complicated psychology. Mr. Asch's writing is so free from both anger and comment, and — without affectation — so apparently ingenuous, as to suggest that he is one of the great writers of our time. Some of these stories are simply heart-wringing, and yet they are never without beauty. It is hard to choose among them, but I hope that nobody will fail to read "The Song of Hunger," "The Carnival Legend," "Heil, Hitler," and "Sanctification of the Name." R. M. G.

AGENT IN ITALY

By S. K.

\$3.00

DOUBLEDAY, DORAN

AN old saying applies to this author: that what is his is not good, and what is good is not his. The daily life and talk of Rome, the rumors and moods, even certain connections between social circles and political events, all the gossip that can be picked up by conversing with all sorts of people, — from the café waiter and the shop girl to the manufacturer with whom one swaps cigars, — are reported with breezy gusto. But when the author tries to cook up a "thriller" in police and society circles his lack of imagination and knowledge betray him. For the political background, he relies on half-understood hearsay; his information and his language are haphazard; he does not even trouble to get the simplest facts straight.

Who is the author, "S. K."? The conclusion that suggests itself is that an enterprising ghost writer got hold of a German salesman who has been doing some espionage on the side and who has the small businessman's unconcern for both intellectual standards and political facts. Indeed, if any of the story were true, we should have good reason to be alarmed, for no altering of names or circumstances could save S. K.'s acquaintances from jail. Any authentic and responsible statement on underground activities is bound to be in general and impersonal terms, as may be seen from Chapter 37, which is expository and not connected with the narrative, and appears to emanate from some well-informed person, probably in this country. This section rings true. From it we extract a passage which is worth pondering: "The [under-

ground] leaders yearn for a new league of peoples' nations, and their idealism is strengthened by the Atlantic Charter. But at the same time . . . Italy must not again lose its identity and independence in a condominium of nations either of the extreme Left or the extreme Right. The Nazis have given them enough of that. The salvation of the country, they declare, must be worked out by those who have stayed and fought and given blood, not by political theorists living outside."

G. D. S.

I REMEMBER CHRISTINE

By Oscar Lewis

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KNOPF

ONE Casebolt, a stuffed shirt and literary prostitute, had recently produced an "official biography" of James Horton, a successful and unscrupulous business buccaneer of old-time San Francisco. Reading Casebolt's sonorous bowdlerizations, Walter Doane, an old friend of the Horton family, decides to explore the history of the late James with an unsparing, if humorous, realism. Casebolt forgot to mention many little incidents of James Horton's career and had neglected to refer in any way to Horton's well-known mistress, Christine Winton. But Doane remembered her and loved her.

This rambling, easy, half-cynical, half-romantic book makes hay of Casebolt and Horton, does acid justice to Horton's daughter Juliet, and paints a most charming and convincing portrait of the delightful, straightforward, amoral Christine.

This is not Mr. Lewis's most "important" book, but nowhere else has he written with greater ease or with a more incisive irony. His novel, — if it can be called such, — although apparently formless and discursive, has the sure line and the sensitive shades of a good etching, and far more humor than one generally finds in etchings. As for Christine, she will be the favorite character of 1942 for many readers. This reviewer backs her against the field for the balance of the year.

R. E. D.

THE UNKNOWN COUNTRY

By Bruce Hutchinson

\$3.50

COWARD MCCANN

THE title of this informal, chatty, colorful, descriptive book about Canada and its people is not ineptly chosen. Paradoxical as it may seem, we are too familiar with Canada to know it intimately or to understand it thoroughly. Superficially Canada lacks the challenge of being "different." Consequently, although many Americans have traveled and hunted and hiked and fished in Canada's hospitable wilds, few could achieve a respectable passing mark in an examination on Canadian history and institutions and racial and economic problems. Mr. Hutchinson comes from the expansive West of Canada, from British Columbia, and his writing has some of the qualities that Americans in the East are sometimes inclined to associate with California. It is fresh and zestful and enthusiastic, with a tendency now and

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then to slip over into excessive exuberance. Mr. Hutchinson is in love with Canada, with its many natural beauties, with its diversity, and with the human beings who make up the Canadian people. He succeeds in making the various provinces come alive as he depicts the shrewd, hardfisted, hard-working French peasant from the island of Orleans, the farmer of the prairies, battered by the depression, the boom spirit of Vancouver, and the vanishing English gentility of Victoria. Now and then he falls into overwriting, as when he has tears "surging down the cheeks" of a French-Canadian orator. But he knows his Canada, its history and its politics and its idiosyncrasies, well. Anyone who is planning to visit Canada's seacoasts and mountains and lakes and forests will find Mr. Hutchinson an agreeable and informative companion. W. H. C.

ANGEL WITH SPURS

By Paul I. Wellman

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LIPPINCOTT

THIS is a novel based on the expedition by the thousand Confederate troopers led by General Jo Shelby into Mexico to join Maximilian. The Civil War was over, but Shelby's men refused to surrender. Instead they marched as a disciplined fighting force to offer their services where they would be most useful, and most appreciated, in Mexico. This offer was not accepted and Shelby's dream of a Mexican state upheld by 50,000 Confederate veterans faded away in failure and frustration. He might have been an empire builder, but his luck was out and his march turned out to be only "a memorable adventure."

As such, its story has definite romantic probabilities and the author has not ignored them. A love story between a young officer and a charming Confederate heroine, a really villainous villain, a red-whiskered Falstaffian, Shelby himself — all the people and fixings are there for a bang-up romantic, historical novel. Somehow it is never entirely successful. The author shows neither the sureness of touch nor the narrative strength and skill which marked his earlier novel, *Jubal Troop*. It is a good story and, if one had not read and admired *Jubal Troop*, one would not complain over the stilted and artificial elements in this novel. As it is, one has the impression that the author read up his subject and then sat down and manfully constructed a historical novel while his publishers called steadily for copy. The result is a good job, but one which lacks inspiration. R. E. D.

VICTORY IN THE PACIFIC

By Alexander Kiralfy

\$2.75

JOHN DAY

THERE is agreement in the United States that Japan must be defeated. There is disagreement as to the means, now that it has become evident that the Japa-

nese navy will not be sunk between breakfast and dinner, and that systematic bombing of Japan's large cities is not feasible at the present time. Some strategic counselors favor an attack on Micronesia, on Japan's far-flung network of mandated islands in the South Pacific. Others build hopes on a continental approach, making the utmost use of the facilities which China affords. Mr. Kiralfy, a specialized student of military and naval strategy, is a northerner in his recommendations. He wants to see the United States, in coöperation with Russia, not only bomb Japan from Eastern Siberian bases but carry out an actual invasion of the Island Empire through its northern backdoor: through the Kuriles, Sakhalin, and Honshu, the Japanese main island. The invasion plan is nothing if not daring, and would pose some formidable transportation problems, especially while Russia's main strength is employed against Hitler in Europe. Apart from presenting the case for his plan (one argument for it is that Japan would be at a vast disadvantage in an air duel with Russia and the United States in this part of the world), the author ranges over the whole field of Far Eastern war. He makes the sound observation that, to Japan's military and naval leaders, "the unorthodox is the rule, and traditional practice the exception," and warns that "Japan can continue marching so long as she has soldiers and the means to supply them." There are some valuable observations on Far Eastern geography and communications. The political side of the Far Eastern struggle is underdeveloped. W. H. C.

THE KNIGHT OF EL DORADO

By Germán Arciniegas

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VIKING

THIS is the story of Don Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada, one of the great Conquistadors of four hundred years ago. So stirring is the material from which the author builds his narrative that now and again he has to remind himself that he is writing a history and a biography and not a work of fiction. His spirited style adds to the illusion, though he contends that there is no necessity for adding decoration to the facts. He asserts that the discoverer of the New Kingdom of Grenada has already served as a model for the hero of one of the greatest novels of all times, that he is indeed none other than the Knight of the Rueful Countenance in person. In common with other adventurers of his kind, Quesada had a twofold object in his expedition to El Dorado, now Colombia, whose capital, Bogotá, he had helped to found. One was to force the Faith on the Red Man; the other, to force from him good gold in return. Many of the Conquistadors went to America nobodies and returned somebodies, their souls bursting with importance and their pockets with gold. Easy come, easy go; some of the adventures inevitably, in the end, lost both importance and gold. Quesada, however, was a just man, and in his maturity he went back to govern the province he had conquered. He did this job like the Christian gentleman he was; in the face of opposition, he tried to do justice to the Indian and



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fought abuses which were the result of the lust for power and gold. For a man of action, he was something of a philosopher; hence the marked resemblance to Don Quixote, whose prototype he was. A distinguished piece of work this — a real thriller for high-brows.

J. C.

HEROES I HAVE KNOWN

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By Max Eastman

SIMON & SCHUSTER

A HERO is a hero is a hero, Gertrude Stein in her expressive way would have said. Max Eastman, however, does not see things as clearly cut as all this. By the time his heroes have gone through the mangle of his analytical mind, they appear frayed and rather the worse for wear — as heroes I mean. As human beings, they gain immeasurably by the process. The author's notion, in general, seems to be that it is wiser to distribute your hero worship among a dozen than among six as Carlyle did. The danger of worshipping heroes, especially if you limit their number, is that it might lead to Hitler, whereas it is better for the purposes of democracy that you kowtow to many — and "many" means a diversity of types and the concomitant tolerance this diversity inspires. However this may be, the idea of the hero is killed in the process. Max Eastman's mother was no doubt a fine woman, and the tribute to her is a fine thing. As for being a hero, however, that's quite another thing. The author himself admits "difficulties" in worshipping Isadora Duncan — then why worship her? The sketch of Art Young makes us wish we knew him and that he was our friend — and that, too, is as far as it goes. We are prepared to admire Carlo Tresca, agitator, at a distance; though Eugene Debs approaches the stature of a real hero. The author employs Mark Twain largely as a vehicle for taking Van Wyck Brooks "for a ride," while the glimpse of Sigmund Freud positively makes him seem paltry. Leon Trotsky appears less the leader we thought him to be; and we frankly prefer Charles Chaplin in his films. Nevertheless, because he knows how to write, Mr. Eastman has written a readable book about human beings whom he has debunked as heroes. Maybe that's what he intended to do.

M. G.

THE TOOLS OF WAR

\$5.00

By James R. Newman

DOUBLEDAY, DORAN

MASSIVE and profusely illustrated, this is almost an encyclopedia of modern warfare. Strategical and tactical conceptions are analyzed at length, and there is a minute treatment of each individual weapon, of the various types of tanks and guns and airplanes. While Mr. Newman does not underrate the tremendous importance of air power, he does not associate himself with the school of thought which is convinced that only air power matters. He believes that

"the terrific spurt taken by military aviation in the last few years is near an end, and there will be no comparable spurt for some time to come." The airplane, like the warship, in the author's opinion, must achieve a certain balance as between fire-power, armor, and mobility; it cannot achieve all three in maximum proportions. The description of the end of the *Bismarck* is perhaps a little imperfect in contents and hasty in conclusion, and military experts may find points of discussion in some of the author's appraisals of modern weapons and their use. But in the main Mr. Newman has produced a thorough and sound manual of modern arms which will help to make other accounts of modern battles and campaigns more coherent and intelligible.

W. H. C.

YOU CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL

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By H. G. Wells

PUTNAM

THIS sets out to be a straight satirical novel about a poor fish named Edward Albert Tewler, one of Mr. Wells's grubby heroes who boggle their way through life; but the author's irrepressible opinionativeness will not stay under. It erupts every now and then and ends by blowing up the novel altogether. Edward Albert represents human nature in its biological aspect, before it can be properly called *Homo sapiens*. At the Tewler level (*Homo Tewler*) it muddles along, following its instincts and the easier way, and finally settling down to a permanent condition of being careful. In poor Edward Albert the ape and tiger are still very active, even — according to Mr. Wells — as in you and me. To the layman there is something wrong with this picture. It is too simple. It leaves out of account the fact that, as another eminent biologist says, we have other prehuman legacies "which are in line with our best endeavors." As satire it would have been all right if Mr. Wells had had more faith in the reader's ability to see what he was driving at. When he throws Tewler aside and writes as impatient, ardent, idealistic H. G. Wells, we go along with him soberly but happily; and when he stays out of his story, as in the chapters about Doober's boarding-house and especially about Harold Thump, the unappreciated humorist, he is very good indeed.

R. M. G.

MEMOIRS OF AN EPICUREAN

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"A MAN," Mr. Sedgwick observes toward the end of his short record of a long life, "is but a consciousness, and a memory, into which the wanton Spirit of Life, having sorted, according to whimsical patterns, the miscellaneous mess of experience that consciousness catches, stows it away in the pigeon-holes of remembrance." The sentence contains the substance of what he means by an Epicurean — one who discharges the moral obligation to ensue happiness by cultivating the pleasures of refined spectatorship and avoiding the more passionate forms of self-identification with collective interests, ideas, causes. To a reader of this

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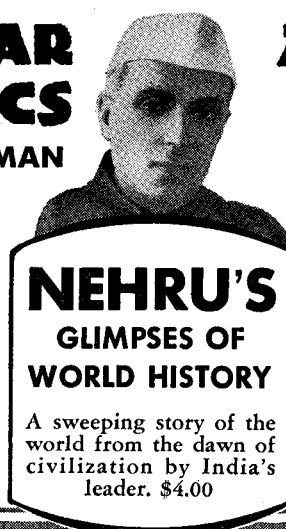
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book, or of any of his books, there is a strangeness, almost a shock, in the discovery that he spent his young manhood drudging at the law, was an assistant district attorney, had (and won) a legal tilt with Tammany Hall over a barefaced election fraud, actually patrickhenried (his word) from soapboxes on street corners in the interest of civic reform, and denounced Andrew Carnegie as one who "had become a multimillionaire upon the labor of thousands and thousands of underpaid workmen, kept in order by Pinkerton detectives." These matters he would presumably classify now among the whimsies in the pattern. Its prevailing figure is a graceful detachment with, alas, a much too graceful modesty. His many volumes of exquisite, sometimes profound interpretation he dismisses as the work of a dilettante biographer and a mere means of keeping himself pleasantly occupied. His innumerable contacts with Grade A celebrities he leaves unexploited, almost unhinted. And in the upshot it comes over us that these reticent memoirs have come astonishingly close to suppressing the fact of his own existence and have given us, not the story of his life, but the successive stages of a mobile outlook upon affairs and institutions, persons and places, books and pictures and the changing times.

W. F.

UNDERGROUND EUROPE

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By Curt Riess

DIAL PRESS

THIS book purports to describe the underground activities of guerrillas, organized or unorganized, citizens, ex-soldiers, men and women in European countries occupied by their German conquerors, who fight back with such weapons and methods as they can obtain. These activities may range from propaganda to dynamiting trains and bridges, from individual assassination or arson, to such highly organized guerrilla warfare as is found in Poland, Russia, and Yugoslavia.

Mr. Riess gives the impression that there is a vast amount of this subterranean activity in subjugated Europe. No doubt the total amount is impressive and a cause of considerable anxiety to the forces of occupation. Only by merciless reprisals, by mass executions of innocent "hostages," by ceaseless search for weapons and propaganda, can these seething populations be kept under a semblance of control. And each reprisal or punishment creates new enemies and new hates. "Collaboration" with Germany is not popular in conquered Europe. Yet I find this book unbalanced and unsatisfactory. It would not be difficult, for example, to collect enough instances of labor unrest and violence in various parts of the United States, in any chosen year, to give the impression that revolution was imminent in this country and only checked by oppression. Mr. Riess proves too much. There are sabotage and propaganda and assassination

in Europe, and these things are symptoms of a state of mind. They are not in themselves very important. Even organized guerrilla warfare, by itself, is almost valueless, except as a nuisance, when opposed by efficient troops; it is of immense value when coördinated with the effort of regular armies. Lawrence in Arabia, the Spanish guerrillas in the Peninsular campaigns, the Russian guerrillas in this war, and many other instances could be cited. But the uncoördinated "wild justice" of which Mr. Riess writes should raise no false hopes from a military standpoint. He proves only that Europeans hate slavery and oppression and would welcome a liberator.

R. E. D.

JAPAN: A WORLD PROBLEM

\$1.75

By H. J. Timperley

JOHN DAY

JAPAN has created in Asia much the same problem that Germany has created for Europe. Like the Germans, the Japanese have developed sufficient military and naval and air strength to upset the old equilibrium of power, and have embarked on a career of conquest so ambitious that the sole Japanese alternative in the future would seem to be world power or downfall. The literature of indictment against Japan has been much shorter than the literature of this type in regard to Germany, partly because Germany is a more familiar country to Americans, partly because Hitler occupied the center of the aggressors' stage until last December. Now it has become painfully evident that there is a second center of world seismic disturbance in Tokyo. Mr. Timperley, a journalist of long experience in the Orient who has been for some years an adviser to the Chinese Government, undertakes to analyze the Japanese problem and to propose a solution in this little book. He stresses the absence of any element of democracy in Japanese history, the exaggerated emphasis on the quality of loyalty, and declares that Japan "has not given to the world a single political, religious, or moral idea that has been of benefit to the human race." His remedy for Japan is similar to that which some observers have proposed for Germany: to place it under severe restrictions as to military and naval power while according the Japanese trade opportunities and access to the raw materials of Asia.

W. H. C.

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shards of domestic vessels, and many evidences of an undated past. Each day was marked by a small adventure, and the habits and customs of the natives gave the young enthusiasts that endless pleasure which sympathetic understanding of alien people always brings.

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W. H. C.

UNCENSORED FRANCE

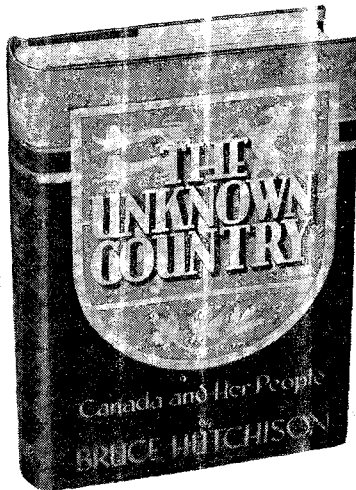
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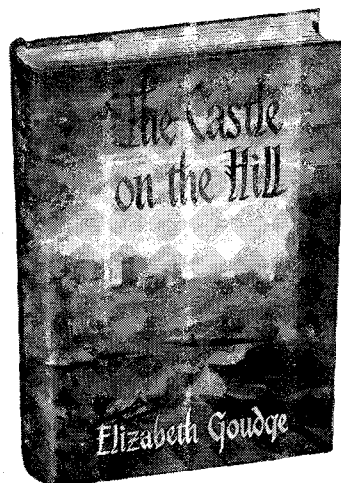
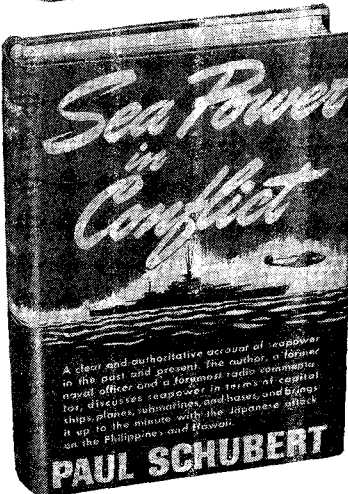
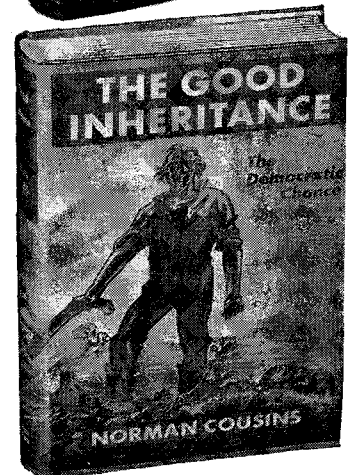
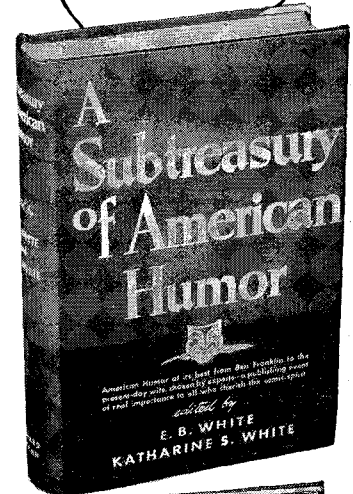
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★ **YALE** ★

volume describes his experiences and observations as an eminent American journalist in Paris during the German occupation. It is excellent reporting. The publishers say: "Here is the first book to come out of occupied France"—which is inaccurate. But it is certainly the first book by a competent and trained American journalist. If it lacks the literary skill of Shirer's *Berlin Diary*, it has the same compelling authenticity: he reports what he saw and thought, and repeats hearsay only as such. For this reason alone the book would be a valuable document. But, if the author confines himself largely to personal experience, he also allows the reader to draw certain conclusions by implication. The Germans, however little they liked or trusted an American A.P. representative, were instructed to treat such creatures with courtesy and extra consideration. Yet Mr. Porter found it hard to get enough of anything in occupied France. He, the officially favored, was hungry more often than not. One can imagine the plight of the poor, the friendless, or those who for any reason had incurred the dislike of the German conquerors. There is a good deal of between-the-lines reading in this book, and it is sad reading. If you want to know what manner of brute the triumphant Boche can be, however suave his manner and however logical his actions, you have only to read the testimony of this able and fair-minded American witness. R. E. D.

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KNOPF

THE Scriptural definition of good measure, of which this compilation is an illustrious example ("pressed down, and shaken together, and running over"), is apparently absent from its 1800-odd pages. So is Bierce's definition of Forefinger, *n.* ("the finger commonly used to point out two malefactors"). The wayfaring reader hunts in vain for ancient seasonal warnings of the folk wisdom, like "Stick to your woolens till they stick to you," and the injunction never to "cast a clout till May be out." The smallest tribute possible to offer is one's unfailing astonishment at such omissions. Think of what quotably aphoristic sentiment you will, from Homer to E. W. Howe, and the chances are at least nineteen to one that you will find it here. An announcement by the publisher claims, with unprecedented mathematical restraint, 33,000 entries; a quick computation from random groups of pages suggests that there may actually be all of 50,000. Besides this copiousness, the two great merits of the book are: (1) its painstaking accuracy in the matter of dates and original sources, and (2) its ideally convenient alphabetical arrangement in a single system of rubrics, with no apparatus of any kind outside of careful cross-references to every alternative rubric under which a sensible person could be expected to look.

There is included an appreciable but not an extravagant allowance of the inveterate Menckanian

wickedness. Examples: (1) "'This is the culminating and final war for human liberty.' Woodrow Wilson: Message to Congress, Jan. 8, 1918"; (2) "'To bring about government by oligarchy, masquerading as democracy, it is fundamentally essential that practically all authority and control be centralized in our Federal government. . . .' F. D. Roosevelt: Radio speech, March 2, 1930."

W. F.

THE AMAZING ROOSEVELT FAMILY,

1613-1942

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By Karl Schriftgiesser

WILFRED FUNK

As the title adjective will hint in advance to the judicious and the suspicious, this family chronicle is not written with overmuch sobriety. It is, to tell the truth, persistently spiced with the least admirable mannerisms of the gossip column, from the exploitation of mere prattle down to the chronic use of the exclamation point to confer piquancy on sentences that have none and on other sentences that have more without it. Moreover, the treatment of the Presidential Roosevelts and their families, occupying over two-fifths of the book, is fulsome in tone as to the Hyde Park branch and monotonously sarcastic as to the Oyster Bay branch, without adding much to the commonly accessible information about either. Nevertheless, on the simple score of legitimate curiosity gratified, the book well justifies its existence and would earn forgiveness for more and worse faults than it has. Between its presentation of the little that is known of Claes Martenszen van Rosenvelt (d. 1658) and its treatment of the parents of our twenty-sixth and thirty-second Presidents it unearths a large number of interesting data touching not only five variegated generations of Roosevelts, in both the direct and the collateral lines, but also the history from colonial times of the society to which they belonged. And the history of that society is the early history of northeastern America. For the Roosevelts, who have some of their blood from the New Amsterdam that we associate with their name, have no negligible part of their blood — or, it would appear from the record, of their characters — from Yankee sources that go back to the first shipload of Pilgrim Fathers.

W. F.

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By Hallett Abend

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This book is the outcome of a nine weeks' journey by air to the prospective theater of war in the East Indies, from which the author returned exactly a month before Pearl Harbor. With no little confusion of arrangement, it weaves together a rather commonplace discussion of general problems of the Pacific, and a record of things seen and heard during this last-minute survey. This record is of keen interest, and parts of it will have a permanent historical value. As a veteran correspondent in the East, all doors were open to Mr. Abend — and he is able to set down at first hand the views of the highest politi-

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cal and military authorities on the expected conflict.

These revealed a sharp contrast of professional opinion. Admiral Helfrich, at Java, believed that the seizing of Indo-China had reversed the odds in favor of Japan, and that her relative position grew stronger month by month. At Manila, General MacArthur held an opposite view. He believed that Japan was then concentrating her armies in Manchuria, and that Japanese transports could not bring more than 125,000 men against the Philippines. At the beginning of October he explained: "Give me a couple of months more, and it will be hopeless for Japan to attack. . . . Their conquest even now would be so hugely costly that it would not pay any foe to make the attempt."

These views Mr. Abend was authorized to cable home October 3, in a dispatch passed by General MacArthur's unofficial "scrutineers." The author suggests that the "masterly retreat" to Bataan is a phrase we use "to cover our chagrin and shame at the loss of Manila." He offers the conclusion: ". . . in the Philippines, too, there was complacency and overconfidence. We lost because in Manila the Japanese forces were underestimated, both as to strength and ability, and because General MacArthur thought his forces were strong enough to repel any attempt at invasion Japan was strong enough to make."

T. H. T.

THE FRENCH IN THE WEST INDIES \$3.00 By W. Adolphe Roberts

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THE frequency with which the word "Martinique" recurs in the headlines is calculated to focus attention on this outpost of French influence in the Caribbean. The whole story of French conquest and settlement in the Caribbean is at once colorful and sultry. The violence of nature in this semitropical area is matched by the violence of man. There have been few natural catastrophes comparable in suddenness and completeness with the eruption of Mont Pelée in Martinique in 1902. The French Revolution found its repercussion in Haiti and Santo Domingo in the fierce Negro uprising which found a competent leader in Toussaint L'Ouverture, and left Haiti the sole black republic in the American hemisphere, with an inheritance of French culture for its governing class and a revival of voodooism among the masses. While the book does not pretend to bring out any strikingly new facts, the interesting narrative is vividly and pleasantly told and concludes with an up-to-date description of the situation in Martinique. W. H. C.

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THE
Atlantic Monthly Press
PRESENTS

a first novel by an *Atlantic* author — ROBERT RICHARDS'S I CAN LICK SEVEN, a realistic story of the South after the Civil War, and of the personal reconstruction of a Confederate officer.

At the close of the War between the States, Colonel Melancthon Fowinkle lost his arm by amputation. Melancthon, a mild and sensitive man, a scholar and teacher before the War, rose to heroic heights when he said to Jeff Davis, who attempted to console him over the loss of his arm, "I could lick ten Yankees before, I can lick seven now."

Though Melancthon was a hero in battle, he had his doubts about taking over the family plantation in Mississippi after the War, an obligation forced upon him by the death of his dashing elder brother, Fairfax. Nor was he sure he could stand up to his brother's beautiful, high-spirited widow, Rachel. He faced the prospect uneasily. He tried to take hold. He loved the land, but he didn't know much about how to work it. He was in love with Rachel, but he didn't dare to admit it. He had a tough, shrewd overseer, Haley Sanders, who helped him keep the plantation from going to pieces. Melancthon admired women as only a Southern gentleman could, but he was inexperienced in dealing with them. Sanders's seductive daughter, Gaberiel, made herself his mistress, while his jealousy of the Yankee captain, Peter Townsley, to whom Rachel was attracted, slowly poisoned his mind. To establish his reputation as a man, he joined the Ku Klux Klan. And then he had to meet financial problems in which Rachel was deeply concerned. But Melancthon was a courageous man, as well as an idealist, and when all he had thought he wanted — Rachel, the land, and leadership — seemed right at his hand, he thought it over and found the answer to all his problems.

This is a hot-blooded, fast-moving novel of the deep South, full of fiery and often passionate action. As the first novel of a young man still in his twenties it deserves high praise and gives high promise for his future writing.

Robert Richards is twenty-six years old. Born in Louisville, Kentucky, he now lives in Memphis where he works on the *Press-Scimitar*. He has worked on this newspaper since his sophomore year at Memphis State — from city desk to sports department to

copy desk to his present assignment, which is covering the courts because his managing editor thought he should know a little more about the seamy side of life. In this novel, however, he has not made use of his court experience but has turned to the field where he is most at home — the Civil War. With ancestors on both sides, Mr. Richards feels he is a neutral and can argue either side with a will. But it wasn't always that way. It seems his maternal grandmother remembered the Yankees and hated them. When he was very young, he hated them too. Then he began reading about the war to justify that hate in some way. And the more he read, the more tolerant he became. He finds that period the most fascinating in American history and hopes to see the day when the South will put its pride in its pocket and study the war from a realistic angle. Mr. Richards does this successfully himself in I CAN LICK SEVEN. Two distinguished short stories of his have already appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*.

We like to believe that every book we publish brings its own reward to the reader. Here are a few which we have brought out under our imprint in the last several months — books that you will read with unmitigated pleasure and long remember for their special qualities:

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LETTERS TO AND FROM THE EDITOR

The attack by Robert Lasch on the *Chicago Tribune* and its publisher, Colonel Robert R. McCormick, is misleading and superficial. It is based largely on manners and personalities and specific instances of criticism of the Administration's conduct of the war.

I have been a reader of the *Chicago Tribune* for thirty years and, even though often annoyed by many of its editorials, I can see it has been consistent in three major beliefs. First, its belief in the liberty of the individual as provided for in our constitutional form of government. Hence its campaign for the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment as an unnecessary violation of the freedom of the individual, and its unrelenting opposition to the New Deal, which it sees as a variety of collectivism in opposition to our traditional democratic form of government. And so Mr. MacLeish's accusation that "it seeks to corrupt the confidence of the American people in their government and in themselves" is wholly fallacious, because what it is striving to do is to restore the confidence of the American people in their form of government and in themselves. Surely, criticism of an administration and certain of its personnel has not previously been considered an evidence of disloyalty to one's country.

A second fundamental belief of the *Tribune* is expressed by its so-called isolationist attitude — although, as such isolation has always included the entire Western Hemisphere with whatever bases were necessary for its protection, such isolation would seem fairly commodious. Years ago when England repudiated her war debt, the *Tribune* asked that she pay the debt by turning over to us some island in the West Indies that we could use for a military base. Again, this position is an evidence of a faith in our country not held by the interventionists.

The third fundamental belief is expressed by the slogan carried repeatedly on its editorial page: "My country. . . . Right or wrong, my country!" This accounts for its wholehearted support of the present war and its demand that the war be run by men of common sense and competence.

If a "war for America" seems vague, it is less vague than the clamor "to win the war." Meaning what? To restore Singapore to the British? Finally,

if our being in this war results in a permanent collectivist form of government for America, then we shall have fought "a war without meaning, a war without real victory." — *C. C. M., Chicago, Ill.*

Your article on the *Chicago Tribune* in the June issue was excellent, but I think perhaps Mr. Lasch failed to bring out one reason for Colonel McCormick's bitter, destructive criticism of our war effort. That is the long-standing rivalry between the *Tribune* and the *Chicago Daily News*, owned by Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox.

For years these two papers have conducted an intense and unending warfare, with the populace more or less taking sides according to the way their sympathies lay. The *Tribune* once referred to the *News* (among other papers) as "Jackals," and the *News* has responded with a series of cartoons specifically lampooning Colonel McCormick and the *Tribune*. This situation is, I believe, unique in present-day metropolitan journalism. In addition, Colonel McCormick has constantly reserved his most outrageous slings and arrows for Colonel Knox's Navy Department. — *Frederic B. Cleaves, Evanston, Ill.*

I have just read "Chicago Patriot," by Robert Lasch, in your June issue. As a subscriber to the *Atlantic Monthly*, may I say that publishing an article which is so evidently government propaganda is not in line with the best interests of the magazine, nor is it what intelligent readers desire. — *Mary Morse-Bailey, Cleveland, Ohio*

Your article, "Chicago Patriot," in the June issue closes, "Is this the voice of middle-class Middle America?" By every measure of public opinion — yes.

And let a Midwesterner of the middle class remind you that the government has not found it necessary to take over any Midwestern factory to assure a steady flow of munitions; as much cannot be said for the war-minded East or Far West. And also their patriotism will not be challenged by any comparison of voluntary enlistments in the Midwest with the East or Far West. — *Harry A. Dinius, Roanoke, Ind.*

FALSE TEETH

**Played "hob" with Daniel Dobb —
But this is how he saved his job**

*From door to door trudged Daniel Dobb,
His sample case in hand;*

*Yet all day long he made no sales,
No orders could he land.*

*Alas! his dingy, foul
false teeth*

*Were more than folks
could stand.*



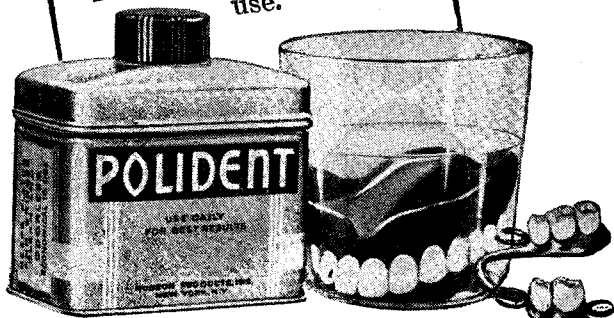
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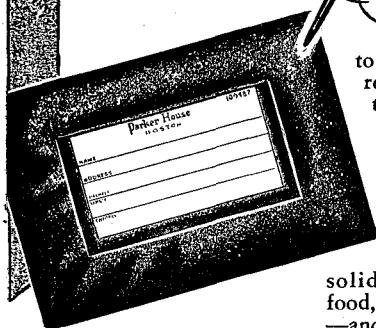
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A Salute FROM One New England Institution to Another

LONGFELLOW'S diary records at least one meeting at the Parker House where he, Lowell, Holmes, Cabot and others met to discuss their new magazine. That magazine was, of course, *The Atlantic*, and the Parker House is proud to have god-fathered such an illustrious infant.

Though they have modernized with the times, both the Parker House and *The Atlantic* are nourished by the deep old roots which go back 80-odd years. It is these roots that make *The Atlantic* so vigorous, so sage, so satisfying; that give the Parker House such traditions, such mellowness, such pleasing character.



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The *Chicago Tribune* is certainly one of the most lively and comprehensive dailies we have in America. But its editorial policy with its intense hatred of the present Administration, its constant belittlement of our foreign policy, and its egotistical insistence that the *Tribune* alone knows the secret of Americanism is in our judgment the work of an erratic patriot.
— THE EDITOR

Notes on Adultery

The June *Atlantic*, 1942, on page 737, puts one of its usually edified readers into an interrogative frame of mind. Is the *Atlantic* taking a little flier? Is the *Atlantic* suggesting countenancing a new code of morals? Does the *Atlantic* commend the idea that a foreign tourist may, by searching, find out the once-thought-private details in the personal life of the American woman—even of "say, the type one meets at dinner round the world"? Are the details of her married life to be investigated in order to supply a foreign tourist with "comments and convictions"? The diner "round the world" represents a small group of women. The average American woman of social experience and grace does not conduct her married life according to a "creed outworn." Her married life would bear, but certainly with her resentment, investigation—borne, apparently, without surprise by the lady in the boat. The recorded incident seems an offensive suggestion to one who may be called old-fashioned, narrow, puritanical, and who hides, as does the contributor whom perhaps she misunderstands, behind the signature *Anonymous*.

The delightful (and true) Notes on Adultery remind me of G. B. Stern. (Wasn't it in *The Matriarch*?) When the harassed daughter-in-law appealed to her, "What is adultery?" the old lady replied, "What people commit."

I am a Victorian, seventy-six years old. Our old minister used to love to read "The Night Before Christmas" to the children. But Santa Claus didn't have "a little round belly, That shook when he laughed like a bowl full of jelly." Oh, no! Mr. Smith made him have a "little round stomach." Never mind rhyme—the proprieties were preserved.—
Florence Griswold Buckstaff, Oshkosh, Wis.

The fault with the article "The Stork, The Goose, The Eagle, and The Swan" in the June *Atlantic* lies in the fact that, while the author may have been a perfectly moral woman herself, she gives too much attention to the expressions of a man who admits himself to be immoral in character, of a low standard of living contrary to all Christian belief.

The trouble is that the casual reader, lacking the so-called Puritanism which offsets these ideas, fails to look beneath the surface and to catch the author's real meaning.

Atlantic Repartee

Even the dictionary defines adultery as "unchastity in action or thought," and we all know of the terrible consequences in the way of venereal disease (all too common) resulting from the violation of sexual laws, and we should do all we can to prevent the spread of such immorality.

The author would have done better to reply to her companion in the words of Sidney Jones:—

This land is better off without
Your uttered ignorance or morbid doubt.
If you have no faith in God or man or self,
Silence all your thoughts till faith shall come;
No one will grieve because your lips are dumb.

— W. H. Holway, Lakeland, Fla.

I should like to propound a question to the nameless lady who, in your June number, goes to the birds for support of the Seventh Commandment. How was it that a woman of the decency, intelligence, and refinement indicated in her writing should find it possible to spend a day so intimately with such a bounder as she pictures her Continental protagonist of adultery? The crudity of his approach and the caddish boasting of his sexual successes should, it would seem, have so disgusted her that further discussion and association would have been summarily cut off instead of being so prolonged and endured. — G. F. Nye, Nashville, Tenn.

There was a tone of smugness in Anonymous and her contribution in the recent June *Atlantic*. If she is so much in love with her husband, why did she go alone on a picnic with a "foreigner" and take such delight in spending the entire time apparently talking of love? It is her own affair how she spends her time, but I wish that she would not be so self-righteous if she must go on picnics with other men. — Mrs. Rufus Rorem, Chicago, Ill.

I have for many years been both a subscriber and a reader of the *Atlantic Monthly*. Sunday evening I picked up the June number with an anticipation of pleasure in reading it. In fact, I began at page one and read along until I came to the article, by an anonymous woman, entitled "The Stork, The Goose, The Eagle, and The Swan." I read it also, with considerable disgust.

There are many cheap and nasty magazines at the newsstands. What moved you to lower the high standard of the *Atlantic* by publication of the article I am objecting to? It may be that I am too stupid to understand the symbolic meaning of such an article. I object so strongly that I wish to discontinue my subscription and hope you will at least take the trouble to read this letter. — Dr. George Woodward, Philadelphia, Penn.

This sketch is based on a theme as old as Eden. In it, as in *Pamela* and *The Sentimental*

Journey, temptation is offered and resisted. To myself and my five associates — two of them women of sensibility — the characters seemed particularly well drawn and the defense of the woman witty and not without dignity. I think it may be a healthy thing to acknowledge with laughter a situation which is bound to occur in this country when the Sophisticate from abroad meets the Puritan at home — and is vanquished. — THE EDITOR

Education in an Emergency

I am always a few months back in my reading, so I apologize for the tardiness of this defense for the Wellesley Class of 1913, which, if my mathematics is right, is the class of the energetic Mrs. Sherman whose letter appeared in the April *Atlantic*. I should like to reassure Mrs. Sherman on the value of the contribution of her Class to humanity. If none of the others had ever raised a hand, their good fortune in having as farsighted, practical a member as Edna Rankin McKinnon would be sufficient for the soundness of Wellesley methods and the glory of "1913."

Edna Rankin McKinnon, by her activities in many states in the organization for planned parenthood, has made an outstanding contribution to the American youth of the future, the welfare of America, and our war and peacetime effort. Perhaps her splendid efforts will alleviate somewhat Mrs. Sherman's indignation with the rest of her college classmates. — Mrs. Hobart Amory McWhorter, Birmingham, Ala.

P. S. Wasn't it ironic that the opening article of the May *Atlantic* should have been by Wellesley's most distinguished alumna!

We were greatly interested in the statement in Dr. Fuess's article in the May issue of the *Atlantic Monthly* to the effect that "meatless meals" at Andover "help to keep morale healthy." The present outlook is that there will be ample supplies of meat of various descriptions for the armed services, lend-lease requirements, and the civilian population of our country. We suggest that a more judicious and more practical method of contributing to the nation's war effort would be to plan meals around the thrifter, but equally nutritious cuts and kinds of meat. Of course such a program might be less spectacular than "meatless meals," but it would be a genuine contribution to good nutrition and good morale. — Norman Draper, American Meat Institute, Chicago, Ill.

Much has been written in the *Atlantic* about the two-versus the four-year college plan, by administrative and professorial heads, whereas little has been heard from the undergraduate or recent graduate on whom the future of our country will depend.

As a recent graduate of Harvard University, I should hate to see the adoption of the two-year plan,

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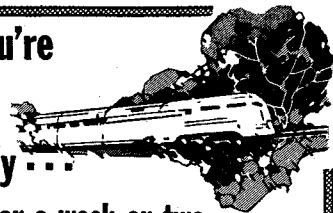
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despite the novelty of experiment. It is the four-year course which to my mind produces, in the words of John Stuart Mill, "capable and cultivated human beings"; but Mr. Schwab in his "Fight for Education" refers to the words of Mill as now lost in the backwash of specialized research. To rescue them he would put our youth through a two-year course in which the three main lines of the natural sciences, the humanities, and social studies will be explored and integrated into a tool for the solution of human problems. In addition the student he will study and become proficient in his "native tongue."

In all friendliness, I feel that Mr. Schwab has beclouded the advantages derived from knowing one branch of knowledge thoroughly, and that he has underestimated the maturing effect of four college years and overestimated the effect of two. — *Cyrus Marden, Camp Croft, S. C.*

The "War on the College" by W. H. Cowley illustrated to a ludicrous degree the kind of argument that Mr. Hutchins's and Mr. Schwab's kind of education would attempt to correct. Mr. Cowley has either a very inadequate conception of what Mr. Hutchins means by education or he is intellectually incapable of grasping the real import of the Chicago "educational revolutions." He made no attempt to attack its essence, but limited himself to its most superficial manifestations.

I have only a layman's acquaintance with educational theory and yet, if I were to set about answering Hutchins's theory, I would at this moment be more prepared than Mr. Cowley seems to be. He speaks as if the whole point at issue were whether a college education should take two years instead of four, and as if Mr. Hutchins were devoted to the sterile intellectualism exemplified by the most Prussianized of German universities. — *Catherine R. Bachman, East Falls Church, Va.*

China Emergent

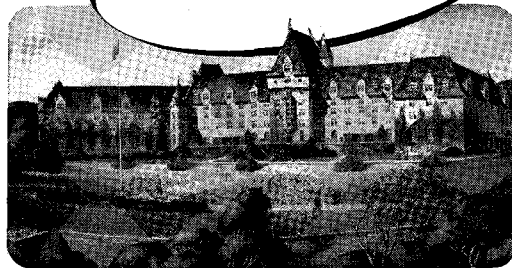
Madame Chiang's article, "China Emergent," in the May *Atlantic* is a challenge to those who know the truth about present-day China and the Kuomintang Government. But first let me make it plain that nowhere in China is there anything but respect, loyalty, praise for the Generalissimo himself, without whose leadership China's resistance to the invader could not have lasted a twelvemonth.

In considering so broad a question as the future of China, however, other views than those of the self-appointed foreign language spokesman of the one-family oligarchy which has ruled China absolutely for the past fifteen years should be taken into account. The present government of Free China swept the country by force of arms in 1926 and established itself at Nanking by the sword, remaining in power through control of the armies.

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racy in China; in government, beyond possibly the *hsien* (county) unit, there is none. The will, the voice of the people is completely smothered by the Chinese version of the Gestapo or Ogpu under General Tai Li, whose agents operate in every city of the world.

Dr. H. H. Kung, Minister of Finance, brother-in-law to Madame Chiang, has placed many difficulties in the way of China's industrial coöperatives, and finally took personal control of this important movement, in order to forestall the organization of a genuine people's party which in time might serve as a basis for a political party to threaten the present Kuomintang absolutism.

Why has Dr. Sun Yat-sen's dearest reform, for each person in a farm family to own five mou of land (twenty-five mou for a family of five) by state arrangement, not by confiscation, been shelved? Why does Dr. Sun's widow, younger sister of Mesdames Chiang and Kung, steadfastly refuse to coöperate with the present regime at Chungking?

Madame Chiang speaks in her article about the People's Political Council established in 1938 "as the precursor of a National Parliament." There is no such thing as free election by the people or by any group of the people to this body. The P.P.C. has absolutely no power; their meetings are entirely subject to the censors. However, many qualified leaders and able patriots, both men and women, do belong to the P.P.C., chiefly by "invitation" or by appointment; but they are entirely powerless, helpless.

China's liberal leaders whisper to their foreign friends, for spies abound, "We must stand firm together now, united for victory, whatever the cost, whatever the suffering. After victory, leave the house-cleaning to us."

Madame Chiang's charges of foreign exploitation of China are largely camouflage to hide the exploitation of the country by the present regime. Extra-territoriality is outmoded and will go. But 90 per cent or more of the residents and a very large proportion of the property owners in the International Settlement and French Concession at Shanghai, in the foreign concessions at Tientsin and the outports, and even in the British crown colony of Hongkong, were retired Chinese officials and their families seeking safety under foreign protection.

It is essential that the writer of a letter such as this on China remain anonymous. If my name were known, my friends in China would be hunted out and persecuted. A few weeks ago a leading Chinese liberal, who is under restraint, in reply to my query as to what might be done to help the people of China, replied, "Tell our friends in America to stop praising the present Chinese Government." — *Anonymous*

We have no wish to seem ill-disposed towards the leaders of our great Chinese ally, but the sincerity of the long letter from which the foregoing was extracted, and the credentials of its author, were such that we felt bound to publish these comments and to respect the obvious grounds for their anonymity. — **THE EDITOR**

General

Your story in the June *Atlantic* called "It's Just the Way It Is," by Flying Officer X, touched me deeply. You call it a sketch, but I should prefer to call it a story, the eternal story, of parental grief and pride, so often repeated in history. — *Mrs. R. Porter White, Grand Rapids, Mich.*

Dr. Koussevitzky's articles on Brahms and Debussy seem to me a revelation in words of those qualities that rank music among the fine arts. They are expressed, too, with understanding and felicity that make them literature. He has added a distinctly new string to the bow of his genius. He has handled music as Charles Eliot Norton handled architecture and painting—and morals. Have him keep on. — *Charles Moore, Big Harbor, Wash.*

I assume it is always daring for any magazine to accept into its coterie any new author or poet. Eliza Johnston Wiggin pointed out in the *Atlantic's* Repartee in the April issue the many years that the *Atlantic* had been "reflecting the best in American literature." I do not know, but I feel that in your discovery of the new poet in the April issue—Marion Edith Smith, who wrote "Spring Comes to Evansville, Indiana"—your magazine is continuing its policy of reflecting the best on new as well as old horizons. — *Helen A. Wolfe, Cambridge, Ohio*

I have read Mr. Clifton Fadiman's interesting and admirable article, "The Ghost of Napoleon," but I should like to add a few remarks, two coming from the economic field, whose importance he perhaps did not realize to the full extent. On page 542 of the *Atlantic Monthly* he says that "the 'scorched earth' policy of 1941 could not be as successful as it was in 1812." This policy in 1941 meant a considerable weakening of Russia's war potential. Experts' estimates range between 40 and 60 per cent of Russia's total industry and agricultural output.

In the following paragraph he states the possibility of a ten or twenty years' war even if the Russians withdraw to the Urals. Virtually everything will depend on whether or not the Russians will keep the Caucasian oil fields, and the transport lines leading from them, open and safe. If Russia is not successful in doing this, her war machine, industry, and agriculture, greatly dependent on oil, will starve not in years but in months after such a disaster.

The most intricate phenomenon in the German-Russian conflict, it seems to me, is that a heroic conception (Fascism) of life opposes a hedonistic one (Marxism). While the hedonistic conception manifests itself in universal heroic actions of the Russian people, the heroic Nazi conception is actually hampered by signs of widespread hedonistic mentality often condemned in the Nazi press. — *F. Ph. Hellin, New York City*

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